THE

HISTORY,

CIVIL AND COMMERCIAL

OF THE

BRITISH WEST INDIES.

BY

BRYAN EDWARDS, ESQ. F.R.S. S.A.

WITH

A CONTINUATION TO THE PRESENT TIME

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WITH MAPS AND PLATES.

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From its commencement in 1793.

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THE

HISTORY,

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OF

THE BRITISH COLONIES

IN THE WEST INDIES.

HISTORY OF THE WAR IN THE WEST INDIES, FROM ITS COMMENCEMENT IN 1793.

CHAPTER V.

Campaign of 1795.—Internal situation of the British Colonies.—Succours received by Victor Hugues.—Proclamation issued by him.—Proceedings in St Lucia.—The Island is abandoned by the English.—St. Vincent's.—Grenada.—Dominica.

THE hopes entertained by Victor Hugues that, even in the colonies which he meant to invade, he should find active partisans to assist him in the prosecution of his designs, were, unfortunately, but too well justified by the result of his exertions That some idea may be formed of the extraneous resources on which he calculated for the furtherance of his plans, it will be proper

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to make the reader acquainted with the internal state of the British colonies, immediately subsequent to his re-conquest of the island of Guadaloupe.

Martinico, though apparently tranquil, contained, thickly sown, the seeds of disaffection. Towards the latter end of January, 1795, General Vaughan, who commanded there, after the departure of Sir Charles Grey, found it necessary to take a step of the most decisive kind. This was no less than the banishment of several hundred individuals, who had prominently manifested their republican principles, by various acts; and, among others, by refusing to take up arms, or to pay the sum levied on them instead of personal service for the defence of the colony, and by open expressions of joy on their hearing of the success of Victor Hugues. With an unpardonable want of policy, these men, in place of being sent where they could have effected no injury, appear to have been allowed to retire to Guadaloupe; where they, of course, formed a welcome, a large, and a desperate addition to the ranks of our most inveterate enemies. It was hoped, indeed, that the retention of their property in Martinico would neutralize their malice; but those who reasoned in this manner seem not to have been aware what sacrifices the spirit of revenge is capable of making. Besides, the exiles cherished an idea natural to persons in

their situation, and which the circumstances of the period contributed to strengthen, that they should shortly return in triumph to their possessions, and that their intermediate sufferings would be amply rewarded by the power under whose banners they had fought, and for which their sufferings had been incurred.

At the close of 1794, a petty yet harassing war was still carried on, by insurgent slaves and democratical whites, in St. Lucia, which was greatly favoured by the uncultivated, impracticable and mountainous nature of the interior. Ground so formed is admirably adapted to enable an adversary to carry on a contest of military chicane and protraction, which, while it confers no glory on those who are exposed to it, is even more fraught than regular warfare with fatigue and with peril. This spark required nothing more than a slight breath to fan it into a destructive flame; and that breath was speedily and effectually supplied.

Such was the internal situation of the recently conquered colonies. Not only, however, in these colonies, but likewise in some of those which had long been under the British government, were there numbers of persons who waited solely for the favourable moment to give vent to their hostile feelings, by bursting forth into open revolt. In Dominica, some of the old French planters had adopted the revolutionary doctrines; and the probable consequences of this, in case

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of an invasion, it was by no means difficult to calculate.

But it was not in this quarter that danger was the most to be apprehended. It was far more formidable in St. Vincent's and in Grenada. In the former of these islands resided a body of men, who considered themselves as having been wantonly and inexpiably injured; and who consequently nourished in their bosoms that deep and permanent spirit of resentment which generally distinguishes the savage tribes. These were the black Charaibes, once the sole possessors of St. Vincent, by right of conquest from the original Charaibes. Many years had elapsed since they were driven by our arms into a corner of the island, which district was secured to them, in 1773, by regular treaty. Still, they could not forbear from looking upon their conquerors as tyrannical intruders, and longing for an opportunity to recover the whole of their ancient territory. Their fears, too, for the safety of what was left them, were frequently excited by the imprudent and dishonest language of some of the colonists, whose insatiable greediness, whenever they cast their eyes from the summit of Mount Young upon the plains beneath, led them openly to express their regret that such fine lands should still be allowed to remain under the control of the savage Charaibes. These savages were not so ignorant as not to

know that those who covet, and have the means of obtaining what they covet, are not likely to be very delicate in availing themselves of those means. It is no wonder, then, that they should have wished, if possible, to accomplish the expulsion of their British neighbours. In this wish, though from less defensible motives, they were heartily joined by many of the planters, who were of French extraction.

Grenada was in a state still more calculated than that of St. Vincent's to excite disquietude, inasmuch as those who were there to be feared were not unenlightened savages, but educated and reflecting men, and therefore less likely to aim a blow before it could be given with a terrible effect. This colony had, for a long period of years, been split into two parties, each of which regarded the other with the bitterest animosity. When, by the treaty of 1763, the island was ceded to Great Britain, an option was given to the inhabitants either to remove within eighteen months, or to remain and take the oath of allegiance. A great majority of the planters adopted the latter part of the alternative, and this implied compliment to the superiority of British government was soon afterwards rewarded by the grant of several honourable privileges. Among other things, Roman Catholics were declared eligible to the assembly, two of them were ordered to be admitted into the council, and some of them

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were included in the commission of the peace. These circumstances excited violent displeasure among the British purchasers of property. They laboured, but in vain, to deprive their fellow subjects of these obnoxious privileges; and their ill success tended to render them more inveterate against the objects of their aversion. The admission of Roman Catholics into the House of Assembly gave, in particular, such extreme disgust, that many zealous Protestants refused to continue to attend on their legislative duties.

To these original causes of complaint other and heavier ones were subsequently added. That injustice which had only been attempted was at length consummated. While these disputes were carrying on, the island was reduced by the French, who retained it for five years. On its being restored to this country, the governor, who was then sent out from England, was directed to replace the inhabitants in the same situation in which they stood, previously to their having been compelled to submit to the French authority. No obedience was paid to these instructions; and their very existence was, for a long while, kept a secret. They at last became known, and as it was impossible to controvert their authenticity, a wretched system of sophistry and cavil was then resorted to, for the purpose of evading them. The adopted subjects, it was said, were aliens, and, as such, incapable of trust.

That they were aliens was endeavoured to be proved, by gravely arguing that they were born under the dominion of France, and that no man had the power to divest himself of his fealty to his natural sovereign. The natives, in reply, contended that, supposing the principle itself to be just, they did not come within the scope of its operation; as they had been absolved from their former duties by the express and voluntary act of the sovereign himself. Indeed such reasoning as was employed against them, did not deserve a serious answer. It might have been laughed at as ridiculous, had it not been used as a formidable weapon in the hands of injustice.

But, however victorious the native subjects might be in argument, force was on the side of their enemies. The result was the complete extinction of their political rights. That nothing might be wanting to wound their feelings, their civil rights were next treated with as little ceremony as their political rights had been. This is in the natural order of things; political and civil rights being almost necessarily co-existent. It has been asserted in print, and no contradiction has ever been ventured upon, that their churches and glebe lands were wrested from them, in spite of a possession of twenty years standing. By these insults and injuries all mutual intercourse was broken; and while the oppressors were exulting in their triumph, the oppressed were only wait-

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ing for a fit moment to take an ample vengeance. The presence of a republican force, falsely professing to bear the banner of liberty and equality, was the match by which this collection of combustible matter was at length exploded.

In aid of these means of offence, which it is obvious were of no slight account, Victor Hugues, at the commencement of the year 1795, was supplied with military resources, to a very considerable extent, from the mother country. As soon as the French government was informed of his successful attempt upon Guadaloupe, it lost no time in sending him such a reinforcement as might at least enable him to carry devastation among the British colonies. The squadron equipped for this service consisted of one 46 gun frigate, one 36 gun frigate, three ships of 20 guns, and ten armed transports, fully laden with troops, and with all kinds of military stores. Notwithstanding the superior numbers and skill of our naval force, this squadron very nearly eluded all its enemies. It had reached the island of Deseada before it was perceived by any of the English cruizers. Fortunately, it was there fallen in with by the Bellona, which captured the Duras, of 20 guns, having on board 400 men, and a large quantity of cannon, mortars, shot, shells, and intrenching tools. Favoured, however, by a squall, and the darkness of the night, the rest of the republican

vessels succeeded in getting safely into the harbour of Point à Pitre.

On the same day, (January 5th) and almost at the same hour, that this event was taking place on the one side of Guadaloupe, an action of a more brilliant nature occurred on the other side of the island. This was the combat, off Mariegalante, between the Blanche, of 32 guns, commanded by the gallant Captain Faulkner, who distinguished himself at Fort Royal, in 1794, and the La Pique, a republican frigate, mounting 38 guns, with several brass swivels on her gunwale. The contest was continued for five hours, at the close of which the enemy surrendered, having lost two hundred men in killed and wounded. The joy of this victory was damped by the death of Captain Faulkner, who was shot through the heart, about the middle of the engagement, while he was a second time employed in lashing the capstan of his own vessel to the bowsprit of his antagonist's. A monument, in St. Paul's Cathedral, to the memory of this brave, intelligent, and zealous officer, was voted by the House of Commons.

As Victor Hugues was straining every nerve to obtain, from America and the neutral colonies, an abundant supply of provisions, our commanders in the West Indies thought it necessary to declare the islands of Guadaloupe, Deseada and Mariegalante, in a state of blockade. This step drew from Hugues a proclamation, full of

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that vulgar and brutal insolence, which disgracefully characterised so many of the revolutionary state papers. It abused, in the most unmeasured language, the British officers, as robbers and pirates, and the British government as sordid and corrupt. It was accompanied by a declaration, in the same strain, but rather more violent, charging the British general with having murdered some republican soldiers, who had been taken prisoners in St. Lucia. Notice was given that, after the publication of this paper, "the assas-"sination of such and every republican, of what-"ever colour he is, and in whatever island it "may happen, shall be expiated by the death of "two English officers, our prisoners." The drift of this notice could not possibly be mistaken. It furnished a powerful stimulus to the negroes and mulattoes, to rise in arms against the whites. That the influence of hope in this quarter might be seconded by that of fear in another, it was added that "any Frenchman, who at the mo-"ment of the landing of an army of the Republic, "commanded by one of us, or by any of our "substitutes, shall not join against the common "enemy, shall be outlawed, and his property "forfeited to the Republic." All Frenchmen who had accepted employment under the English authority, and all those who emigrated before the capture of the colonies, or who assisted in delivering them up, were, at the same time,

declared to be traitors to their country, and subject, as such, to the punishment of death. These audacious and sanguinary compositions were signed by Victor Hugues, and by his colleagues, Goyrand and Le Bas; and a flag of truce was dispatched to communicate them to General Vaughan and Admiral Caldwell. A translation was likewise made of them into English, for the purpose of distribution in all the colonies.

Possessed of both the power and the will to do mischief, Victor Hugues hastened to commence his operations. His emissaries were sent, in light fast-sailing vessels, to all quarters, and were as active as he himself could desire them to be, in fulfilling their deadly mission. Arms and small parties of troops were forwarded in the same manner. The British trade was also incessantly and greatly annoyed, by swarms of privateers from the harbours of Guadaloupe. He boasted that, in the course of a few months, little short of a hundred sail of merchantmen had been taken or destroyed by the cruisers which he employed. Early in the year, a further addition was made to his resources, by the reduction of St. Eustatia, where he found large magazines of naval and other stores; an acquisition of the utmost importance to him, as the capture of the Duras had deprived him of a considerable part of those which were dispatched to him in the convoy from France.

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Though his designs against the islands were simultaneously carried on, yet the plan which was first ripened appears to have been that against St. Lucia. No official, and scarcely any other, accounts of the event are to be found, but the invasion of this colony appears to have been effected about the middle of February; as the declaration, above-mentioned, names the persons who were then acting under the republican commission. Nor can the strength of the invading force be now ascertained. That force was probably few in number, and stolen into the island in small bodies, and under cover of the night. Aided, however, by an insurrection of the slaves, people of colour, and democratical whites, it was sufficient to wrest from us the whole of the colony, with the exception of the two posts of the Carenage and the Morne Fortune.

Affairs remained in this situation till about the middle of April, when Brigadier-general Stewart resumed active operations, in the hope of recovering the lost ground. The enemy were twice defeated, compelled to retire from Vieux Fort, and to fall back upon Souffriere, which was their chief hold. These successes somewhat raised the spirits of the assailants, and were hailed as an omen of still further good fortune. Resolved to follow up his blow, General Stewart advanced against Souffriere. Undismayed, however, by their recent defeats, the republicans had

collected together a very formidable force, for the defence of their main position. They knew, indeed, that on the retention of it almost every thing depended. On his march, the British general was suddenly attacked by a division which had been placed in ambush, and it was not till after a severe struggle that the enemy were driven back. On the 22d of April, the troops reached the neighbourhood of Souffriere, and were led to the assault. The contest continued warmly for seven hours; and, though every exertion was made by the assailants, they were finally compelled to retreat to Vieux Fort, with a loss, in the two engagements, of nearly two hundred men.

This repulse put an end to all hopes of doing more, for the present, than barely retaining a footing in the island, by means of the posts which were yet in our possession. The natural strength of Morne Fortune justified the expectation that the British might make a stand there till reinforcements could arrive.

Two months passed away without the occurrence of any event worthy of notice. Sickness, in the mean time, was making great ravages among the British, one half of whose force was generally unfit for service. Desertion, too, is said to have assisted in thinning the ranks. The enemy, on the other hand, were daily gaining fresh accessions of strength. To the climate

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they were habituated; and, besides, disease is less fatal to the active and victorious, than to the inert and defeated. From Guadaloupe, arms and other supplies were frequently transmitted; and, though some of the vessels fell into the hands of our cruisers, many more of them reached their destination in safety.

The republicans now began to act decisively. They first reduced Pigeon island, and several other posts; and, on the seventeenth of June, made themselves masters of the Vigie. By this means they interrupted the communication with the Carenage, and held, as it were, the keys of Morne Fortune, upon which they now prepared for a desperate assault. As, in the weak condition of the garrison, it would have been imprudent to hazard the consequences of the meditated attack, the general determined to withdraw his troops. This determination was hastily carried into effect, on the evening of the eighteenth. The British, leaving behind them some women and children, and a quantity of stores, withdrew undisturbed to the ships; and thus the whole of St. Lucia reverted to the republican control. It is but justice to the enemy to state, that the women and children were, without delay, allowed to pass over to Martinico, in a flag of truce.

While these events were taking place in St. Lucia, the work of desolation was proceeding in the other British islands. In St. Vincent's, the affairs

of which colony we shall take next in the order of narration, the expected allies of Victor Hugues fully performed the task which had been assigned to them. Under the command of a Charaibe chief named Chatoye, the Charaibes, and the democratical French planters, commenced their revolt, in the beginning of March. One of the first acts of Chatoye was to issue a proclamation, denouncing vengeance upon such Frenchmen as did not join his standard in the course of the day. "We do swear," said he, "that both fire "and sword shall be employed against them, "that we are going to burn their estates, and "that we will murder their wives and children, "in order to annihilate their race." The deeds of these savages were in strict unison with their language. At the very outset of their career, they indulged themselves in the commission of the most dreadful enormities. The windward plantations were set in flames, the unarmed slaves and defenceless women and children were slaughtered, and, to crown the whole, several English prisoners, who had been taken at Chateau Bellair, were massacred in cold blood, upon Dorsetshire hill, four days subsequently to their capture. Had the insurgents been joined by the negroes, all would, doubtless, have been lost. But it fortunately happened, that between the slaves and the Charaibes there existed a deadly animosity, which prevented any junction; the

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V. former considering the latter as their enemies, because they were their rivals in the sale of the
1795. produce of their gardens. This alone was sufficient to render the slaves the firm auxiliaries of their masters.

In a few days after the breaking out of the revolt, Governor Seaton issued a proclamation, declaring the revolters to be rebels; offering, however, an amnesty to such as should surrender within a short period, but threatening with the severest penalties of the law all who should persist in their treasonable career.

Victor Hugues, meanwhile, had not been idle. As soon as he knew that the Charaibes had commenced their operations, he dispatched to them a small quantity of provisions, arms, and ammunition; and at the same time notified that further succour was preparing, and that two officers had been appointed to take the command of the French traitors and soldiers in St. Vincent's. In his wonted style, he reminded them that the French had always been their friends, and the supporters of their liberty, and he strenuously exhorted them to combine closely with the republicans, for the laudable purpose of exterminating all the English inhabitants.

It was on the 10th of March that the insurrection broke out. A party of the militia immediately marched against the enemy, but it was repulsed with some loss. Flushed w

their success, the Charaibs advanced, and, on the 13th, took post upon Dorsetshire Hill, which overlooks and commands the town of Kingston. The inhabitants had, on that day, fortunately received a supply of arms and ammunition. Governor Seaton determined, therefore, to dislodge the rebels from their menacing position. The attack was made at midnight, by a detachment of militia, volunteers, and negroes, with a few regular troops and sailors, led by Captain Campbell of the 46th regiment, and Captain Skinner, of the Zebra. It succeeded fully; the Charaibs being driven from the hill, with the loss of their chief and about fifty men. The chief who fell was Chatoye, and his death wound was given to him by the bayonet of Major Leith.

Nearly a month elapsed during which the Charaibs continued without restraint their devastations and barbarities; the British force being too weak to attempt any thing against them. Though driven from Dorsetshire Hill, they still kept their ground in the vicinity of Kingston. At length, on the sixth of April, transports came into the harbour with the 46th regiment. It was now resolved to establish a post at Calliaqua, in order to prevent the landing of succours from the grand arsenal of mischief in Guadaloupe. As a previous measure, a plan of attack on the rebels was formed, by which, if carried into full execution, it was hoped that their retreat might be cut

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off, and thus a decisive blow be struck at the root of the war. The troops accordingly marched, on the night of the 10th of April, in several columns, against the Charaib camp. But, as too often happens in nocturnal enterprises by insulated bodies, the whole of them did not reach at the same time the points to which they were directed. Some of the columns were too late, and by this means the design of hemming in the enemy was unfortunately frustrated. The columns, however, which did arrive at their destination, performed their share of the service with spirit and effect. The Charaibs and republicans, after having made a vigorous resistance, were scattered in all directions by the bayonet, and numbers of them were slain. As soon as the troops had refreshed themselves, and recovered somewhat from their fatigue, a part of them proceeded to Calliaqua, and took post in the barrack ground of that place. In this contest the loss which the British had most to lament was that of three young volunteers, Messieurs Taylor, Hepburn, and M'Broom, who greatly distinguished themselves on this occasion by their zeal and courage.

A victory over the rebels was, however, like cutting off a single head of the fabled hydra. Nothing more was gained by it than a momentary respite. The victors, weakened even by their triumph, were not strong enough to follow

up their blow, and thus to prevent their discomfited adversaries from acquiring fresh vigour. From Guadaloupe, and from the nearer isle of St. Lucia, reinforcements were perpetually arriving, to swell the ranks, and to raise the spirits, of the revolters.

On the 7th of May, the enemy, seven or eight hundred in number, appeared on the heights above Calliaqua, and twice, in the most insulting terms, summoned the commandant, Captain Molesworth, to surrender at discretion. Their summons, however, was treated with contempt. The Alarm frigate having instantly been sent round, to the aid of Captain Molesworth, they abandoned this enterprise, and turned their thoughts to the reduction of Kingston. Governor Seaton had foreseen that this would be their object; and had, in consequence, taken the precaution of sending a party of 120 men, with a field-piece, to secure the important post of Dorsetshire Hill. About one in the morning, this small corps was furiously attacked by nearly thrice its strength of French and Charaibes, who advanced to the assault with the most horrible shouts and yells. For a long while the British resisted with the utmost bravery; but, their ammunition being at length expended, they were under the necessity of retreating to Sion Hill, leaving behind them the field-piece, imperfectly spiked.

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Well aware that to allow the enemy to retain the hill was to give up Kingston to certain destruction, (the town, as the reader has already been told, being entirely overlooked from that eminence,) the governor deemed it indispensable to exert himself for its recovery, without the delay of a moment. Sixty men of the 46th regiment, a hundred rangers, and forty militia, the whole headed by Lieutenant-colonel Seaton, were hastily got together, began their march before the dawn, and reached the outposts of the enemy just at the breaking of day. The republicans, meanwhile, had not been deficient in activity. They had been joined by a hundred additional men, and had contrived to render the field-piece once more serviceable. A heavy fire of grape from it unexpectedly annoyed the British in their approach to the summit of the hill. Nevertheless, in spite of this galling fire, and of a determined resistance, the assailants steadily ascended the hill; and in less than half an hour the republicans were flying in all directions. The routed enemy was supposed to have lost nearly a hundred men in this sharp encounter.

This advantage, however, availed no further than to free the immediate neighbourhood of Kingston from the presence of the enemy. They still kept the field, and held, at no great distance, the important post of the Vigie. This post was situated on a ridge, forming the south-west side

of the valley of Marriaqua, and consisted of three small eminences, of different heights; that nearest to the sea, though the lowest, being the most extensive of them all, and that to the fortifying of which they had paid the most attention. They had, indeed, taken considerable pains with the whole of the position, and were daily increasing its strength.

In order to satisfy himself as to the state and military wants of the colony, the commander-in-chief, Sir John Vaughan, came over from Martinico to St. Vincent's, shortly after the last defeat of the revolters at Dorsetshire Hill. Immediately on his return to Martinico, he dispatched to Kingston a reinforcement of artillery, with a quantity of military stores, and he followed up this measure by sending a hundred rangers, and the third battalion of the 60th regiment, which had originally been destined for another service. This welcome aid arrived in the beginning of June.

Thus reinforced, Lieutenant-colonel Leighton, who now headed the force at St. Vincent's, wisely determined to make a prompt and vigorous effort to crush the enemy, or at least to drive them to their own quarter of the island, and confine them there. The Vigie was, of course, the first object of attack. For the purpose of reducing this post, the troops, consisting of a part of the 46th and 60th regiments, the rangers,

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a detachment of the militia, and some seamen from the ships, with four six-pounders and two mortars, were put in motion, on the night of the 8th of June, in three columns. On reaching Calder Ridge, the latter column was divided into small bodies, and ordered to secure certain passes, for the purpose of intercepting the enemy in case of their flight.

Just before break of day, Lieutenant-colonel Ritchie with the column under his orders commenced his assault on the upper post, which was carried without much difficulty. The troops then pushed on against the second eminence, and were equally successful. Recovering, however, from their panic, on perceiving only one division, the enemy now sallied forth from their main hold; but at this moment the second column came up, under Lieutenant-colonel Leighton, upon seeing which they precipitately retired within the shelter of their works. The same was also done by a body of them, which had intended to fall upon Lieutenant-colonel Prevost, at Calder Ridge.

The grenadiers had, in the meanwhile, climbed through the bushes upon Ross's Ridge, and being now met by the light company, which had kept along the road, the whole of the British advanced against the third and strongest eminence, where the enemy had rallied, to make their final stand. At the upper end of the road

a deep trench had been cut; but this obstacle did not long delay the progress of the artillery. By the strenuous exertions of the sailors and artillery-men, the guns and mortars were lifted up a bank eight or ten feet in height, and their fire was then opened with vigour and destructive effect.

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For a while the enemy returned the British fire with equal spirit. About eight o'clock, however, they beat a parley, and sent out a flag of truce to propose terms, which were refused as being wholly inadmissible. The troops now pressed onward to the assault, and in a short time made themselves masters of the works, which were defended chiefly by the republicans from Guadaloupe, the Charaibes having retired at an early period of the morning. By this timely retreat the wily Charaibes frustrated the scheme which had been formed for cutting them off from the windward quarter of the island. Sixty men of the garrison were taken prisoners, with their commander, M. Soulhat, who was severely wounded. No less than two hundred and fifty of the enemy are said to have fallen in this contest. The loss of the British, in killed and wounded, was nearly one fourth of that number. Captain Piguet, of the 60th regiment, was the only officer who was slain. In the fort were three four pounders and sixteen or seventeen swivels; the ammunition for which was not

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composed of shot, but of the most villainous combination of missiles that could be employed in warfare: it consisted of mill-wedges, coopers' rivets, cart-wheel nails, long stripes of lead tied into bundles, and other means of annoyance of a similar kind.

At the close of the action parties were sent out, to scour the valley of Marriaqua, and destroy the dwellings of the Charaibes. This service they effectually accomplished before night-fall; having killed and taken prisoners many of the fugitives, and driven the remainder into Massirica, without having encountered any resistance, except on one point, where a trifling loss was sustained.

Having provided for the security of the Vigie, Lieutenant-colonel Leighton, on the morning of the 13th, marched with the whole of the troops, by several routes, towards the Charaibe district. So little opposition was made to their march, the enemy constantly falling back from ridge to ridge, that, on the afternoon of the 16th, they reached Mount Young, from which the Charaibes fled with such precipitation that they left standing their houses, in all of which considerable quantities of corn were found. This carelessness of the enemy was a fortunate circumstance for their adversaries, to whom it gave those means of shelter which, in the West Indies, are so particularly needful to prevent

the ravages of disease. It was also no less fortunate that, dispirited by their recent discomfiture, the enemy had not, during the progress of the British, availed themselves of the natural advantages of the ground, to keep up a harassing warfare, which would certainly have weakened and embarrassed their opponents. Had they disputed the hills and passes, there can be no doubt that our army would have suffered greatly, as seven men expired on the march, from fatigue alone.

As soon as Mount Young was in our possession, the troops were busily employed in spreading devastation through the Charaibe district. In Grand Sable, and other parts of the country, many houses were burnt, and more than two hundred pettiaugres and canoes, some of them of a large size, are said to have been demolished. Several hundred negroes were also sent out, under the protection of military detachments, to dig up and destroy the provisions of the enemy. At the same time it was judged advisable to occupy, at the north extremity of the island, the post of Owia, on a bay of that name, to prevent the landing of the republicans on that side. The boats, which carried the troops, were at first driven back by a heavy fire, but under cover of a cannonade from the Thorn sloop, the men were at length landed, and the post was established. It was, however, ex-

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posed to frequent attacks from the enemy, who still kept their ground among the fastnesses of its immediate neighbourhood.

The tide of success, which had hitherto flowed in our favour, now began to run, with still greater rapidity, in an opposite direction. The British, indeed, on the 7th of August, drove the enemy, with great slaughter, from a camp which they occupied on Morne Ronde. This, however, was their last fortunate enterprize, and it was heavily counterbalanced by a blow which they soon after received in the northern part of the island, where a detachment from St. Lucia surprised the post of Owia, killed about eighty of the garrison, and compelled the remainder to take refuge in some small vessels, leaving behind them their cannon, and large quantities of provisions and stores.

Every day's experience rendered more apparent the fatal consequences arising from our abandonment of St. Lucia. The proximity of that island enabled the republicans unceasingly to pour in new reinforcements to their friends in St. Vincent's; and of this advantage they were by no means negligent in availing themselves. Their light craft generally succeeded in eluding our cruizers, and landing their destructive freight on some point of the northern coast.

Stimulated by the prosperous issue which, in two instances, his labours had found, Victor

Hugues resolved to make a bold push to achieve a third conquest. A descent upon Martinico was at first his real or ostensible project. It is probable, however, that the rumour of an immediate attack upon that island was only spread by him, in order to deter the British general from dispatching succours to the neighbouring colonies. Be that as it may, it is certain that, before the middle of September, he landed in St. Lucia with a military force, which was said to consist of about 800 men.

The republican chief did not long leave his enemies in doubt as to what were his intentions. Having promptly made all the arrangements for his enterprise, he embarked five hundred men in four vessels, and sent them over to St. Vincent's. This squadron reached Owia Bay on the morning of the 18th of September, and the republicans effected their landing without difficulty; the cruizers by which they were perceived not being strong enough to cope with them, and the Thorn and Experiment, ships of war on that station, having unfortunately been drifted far to leeward by the force of the current. This additional weight turned the scale so completely on the side of the enemy, that it became impossible for the British to retain those positions to which they had recently advanced. Orders were, therefore, given to Lieutenant-colonel Leighton, to abandon Mount Young without delay, and

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retire to the vicinity of Kingston. They were carried into execution on the night of the 18th. Having destroyed their magazines, and left their lights as usual burning in their huts to deceive the enemy, the troops were silently put in motion, and reached Calliaqua unmolested, on the evening of the next day, where they halted for a few hours, and were then distributed among the posts in the neighbourhood.

The retreating British were speedily followed by the Charaibes and republicans, who drove off the cattle from several estates, and finally took up a position on Fairbairn's Ridge, by which the communication was cut off between Kingston and the Vigie. The latter post being scantily furnished with provisions, Lieutenant-colonel Ritchie, with three hundred regulars and rangers, was detached to escort the necessary supplies. His division had nearly reached its destination when it fell in with the enemy; a sharp action ensued; victory was on the eve of declaring for the British, when, struck by an unaccountable panic, they suddenly gave way, and fled in all directions, hotly pursued by that foe whom but a moment before they had almost routed. Neither the threats nor intreaties of their leaders could arrest their flight. About thirty, several of them officers, at the head of whom was Lieutenant-colonel Ritchie, threw themselves into a mill, and among the ruins of some buildings,

where they gallantly defended themselves against several desperate assaults till night, when their assailants retired, having suffered severely in their repeated attempts upon this contemptible post. Lieutenant-colonel Ritchie, whose coolness had been conspicuous during this affair, was the only person of this gallant little band who was wounded, and his wound was a mortal one. Of the remainder of the scattered division, a part took shelter under the guns of Fort Duvernette, and a part escaped among the rocks, whence they were conveyed to Kingston by boats, the road by land being now closed against them. Our loss was about sixty men; the provisions fell into the hands of the enemy; and a number of the mules were killed.

The news of this terrible disaster spread dismay through Kingston. It was at first feared that the whole of Ritchie's corps was destroyed, and that, wisely availing themselves of the weakened and disheartened state of the garrison, the victorious enemy would pursue their success, by an instant attack upon the whole of the British posts. It seems, indeed, wonderful that they did not adopt a measure so obviously recommended by the favourable circumstances of the moment. As the missing troops came in these fears, however, subsided. It was, nevertheless, resolved to concentrate the forces as much as possible, and, for this purpose, to abandon all the

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distant positions. Of these the Vigie was the nearest and the most in danger. By different routes, two negroes were dispatched, bearing to the commander there instructions to bring off his party. One of them succeeded in executing his commission. To facilitate the retreat from the Vigie, Brigadier-General Myers marched with a division from Dorsetshire Hill, and posted himself opposite to the enemy. This movement had the desired effect. It induced the republicans, in expectation of an attack, to call in all the detachments which invested the Vigie, and it thus gave to Captain Cope, who commanded there, an opportunity of accomplishing an unmolested retreat. In another quarter, Morne Ronde was also evacuated by Captain Molesworth, and the garrison was brought round in two armed vessels. At the same time care was taken to strengthen the defensible posts in the neighbourhood of Kingston.

While the colonists were suffering under these misfortunes and alarms, they received the welcome intelligence that four regiments had arrived at Martinico, and that vessels, containing a part of these reinforcements, were then getting under weigh for St. Vincent's. On the 29th of September, the people of Kingston had the gratification to behold the succours approaching toward their harbour. All the small craft in the bay were eagerly put in requisition, to land a

part of the troops that night; and, on the following morning, the remainder were put on shore. They consisted of the 40th, 54th and 59th regiments, which had recently been engaged in the continental campaigns. The Scipio man of war, which convoyed them, brought over Major-general Irving, from Martinico, to assume the command.

The first effect produced by the arrival of this succour was the retiring of the enemy from their advanced position, on Fairbairn's Ridge, to the post of the Vigie, where they now collected the whole of their strength. From this post Major-general Irving, as a preliminary step to his future operations, determined immediately to dislodge them. Accordingly, on the night of the 1st of October, the troops were put in motion for that purpose. The first column, consisting of 750 men, under Lieutenant-colonel Strutt, was ordered to march by the high road and take post upon Calder Ridge, on the east side of the Vigie. It reached its ground about three in the morning. The second column, which was the principal, was composed of 900 men, and the artillery, and was led by Generals Irving and Myers. After having passed the river Warriwarow, it sent off a detachment, with two pieces of cannon, to proceed round by Calliaqua; but, so impracticable were the roads, that the guns were obliged to return to Sion Hill.

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Another detachment, of eight companies, entrusted to Captain Boland, was directed to move up the valley, and then mount the heights, near Joseph Dubuc's. To gain the point to which this force was directed, it was necessary to cross a deep rivulet, and ascend a steep hill, covered with bushes and wood. In doing this, it suffered a heavy loss, both of officers and men, from the enemy, who fired upon it, almost in security, under shelter of the bushes. As the British, however, still continued to press onward, the republicans withdrew, and the assailants at length arrived on the top of the Marriaqua or Vigie Ridge.

In the mean time, the 59th regiment, and the artillery, forming the rest of the second column, were also struggling to reach the summit of the same ridge: but this they failed to accomplish. The ground was steep, the enemy had strongly occupied a thick wood near the top of the hill, and had thrown up a small work; added to which, the rain had fallen so heavily at day break, that it was impossible to obtain a footing on the abrupt and slippery declivity. In this quarter, too the republicans had united the major part of their force. While the assailants were in this situation, they were joined by four additional companies of the 40th, from Dorsetshire Hill, and, some hours after, by lieutenant-colonel Strutt's party from Calder Ridge.

Though the hostile armies were within fifty paces of each other, not an inch of ground was won on either side. Three abortive attempts to charge were made by the republicans. The firing had begun at seven in the morning, and it was obstinately and hotly kept up, by both parties, till the night came on. All this while the British were exposed not only to fatigue but also to violent showers. Finding that he could make no impression on the enemy, and that his men were greatly exhausted, the general, about seven in the evening, thought it necessary to give orders for the troops to return to their former quarters. In this protracted and indecisive contest our loss exceeded a hundred and fifty men, of whom six were officers.

It was natural to expect that the result of this engagement would be to give confidence to the republicans, who had repelled the most strenuous attacks of the whole strength of their enemies; a part, too, of those enemies being regular troops, brought fresh into action, and anxious to distinguish themselves. Such, however, was not the case. What all the valour of their foes had failed to achieve during the day, was brought about at night by their own fears. While their tired assailants were retreating from before their position, they actually abandoned that position, and with so much haste, that they left behind them, undestroyed, both cannon and ammunition.

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The first knowledge of their flight was obtained by a non-commissioned officer, and eight or ten men, who having, in the darkness, missed their road when the British army retired, wandered unawares into the Vigie, and discovered that it was deserted by the enemy. It was, in consequence, taken possession of, on the following morning, by a party of rangers.

From the Vigie the enemy continued their retreat till they reached the windward part of the island. The British now, in their turn, advanced. For the remainder of the year, however, the exertions of our army were confined to circumscribing within as narrow limits as possible the republicans and their native allies; and, though many lives were undoubtedly lost in performing this, and many hardships were endured, yet no event occurred which was of sufficient importance to be recorded in the page of history.

The colony of Grenada, still more unfortunate than that of St. Vincent's, next demands our attention. It has already been shewn in what state of ferment and irritation were the minds of a large number of its inhabitants. Against the probable consequences of that ferment and irritation, no precautions whatever appear to have been taken. It seems as if common sense had fled at the same time with justice. The governor was obstinately deaf to repeated warnings of the danger; the militia, not above

six hundred strong, were scarcely ever exercised, and their arms were kept locked up in the court house of St. George's; the regular garrison had dwindled to little more than two hundred men; and the fortifications had been allowed to fall into a ruinous condition. Such palpable neglect as this, was nothing less than holding out a bounty to rebellion.

To Guadaloupe two deputies had been secretly dispatched, by the disaffected French and men of colour. These emissaries now returned with commissions, as French officers, for the chiefs of the revolt, with caps of liberty, national cockades, and a standard, bearing the words "liberty, equality, or death," and, what was of more weight, with muskets and ammunition; and a promise that this trifling succour should speedily be followed by more effectual support. A mulatto named Julien Fedon was nominated general of the insurgents, and Besson, another mulatto, was appointed his second.

On the return of the deputies, the disaffected resolved to put their plans in execution. Accordingly, at nearly the same hour, on the night of the 2d of March, they began their operations, by attacking Grenville and Charlotte-town, which are situated on opposite sides of the island. At Charlotte-town they surprised the inhabitants in their beds, and carried them off prisoners, after having pillaged the place. But at Grenville they

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did not confine themselves to plundering and making prisoners. The English were murdered in the most ferocious manner, and their dead bodies were mangled by the brutal assassins. Having accomplished this part of their scheme, the rebels proceeded to the rendezvous at Belvidere, which lies midway between Grenville and Charlotte-town. In the morning, as governor Home, and some other gentlemen, were coming round in a vessel to Charlotte-town, they unfortunately fell into the hands of the revolters, and, in consequence of this capture, the authority over the colony devolved to the president, Mr Kenneth Mackenzie.

Though the rebels had begun their career by such desperate outrage as seemed to imply that they had so perfect a reliance on their own strength as to believe that they might throw away the scabbard, they were, nevertheless, at the outset, neither formidable in numbers, nor well supplied for a protracted contest. Had a sudden blow been struck, before they had established themselves in their fastnesses, and rallied all their partisans, it would probably have put an end to their rebellion. Nothing, however, was even undertaken against them for the better part of a week; and then, a plan which had been formed, for attacking their camp, was abandoned, after a feeble and fruitless attempt to carry it into effect. In reality, scarcely any vigour appears at this period

to have been manifested, except by Captain Rogers, of the Quebec, who exerted himself zealously, to secure various posts which were menaced, and to put others in a defensible state.

Immediately on the rebellion breaking out, dispatches were sent to Martinico and to Trinidad, to intreat that succours might be afforded; and a proclamation was issued, holding out an amnesty to any of the insurgents who would surrender, and a reward for the capture of those who joined or gave assistance to the traitors in arms. The rebels, on their side, imperiously summoned the General Council to give up the island to the French republic. This summons was, of course, treated with the contempt which it deserved.

On the 12th of March, Brigadier-general Lindsay landed from Martinico, and assumed the command. The reinforcement which he brought was but of trifling amount. It consisted only of a few of the artillery corps, and a hundred and twenty men. The general, nevertheless, was desirous to supply, by spirit and activity, the deficiency of resources. He, therefore, put in motion without delay all the force that he could muster, and marched towards the enemy's camp of Belvidere. The first rebel out-post was carried, but the approach of night compelled the troops to delay, till next morning, the attack upon the camp. But, before break of day, heavy rains set in, which continued for a week, and

suspended all military movements. The want of rest, exposure to the weather, and, above all,
1795. those high and honourable feelings which led him to consider his disappointment as a disgrace, had a fatal effect upon the body and mind of the general. A fever ensued, and, while labouring under the delirium incident to his disease, he put an end to his existence. He died universally regretted by his soldiers, and by all who knew him.

The death of the general necessarily disarranged all the plans which he had formed. The respite thus afforded was of infinite benefit to the rebels. Every day they were joined by some of their negro, mulatto or white associates; so that by the close of the month, they were several thousand strong. It was fortunate that they were scantily supplied with ammunition; a circumstance which greatly contributed to limit their destructive energy. Still, the work of devastation proceeded; culture ceased, plantations were ruined, and irreparable injury was inflicted on the unfortunate colonists.

It was not until the 2d of April, one month after the breaking out of the rebellion, that any assistance of magnitude was sent to the relief of Grenada. The arrival of troops from England then enabled Sir John Vaughan to detach to Grenada about 1250 men. On its landing, a part of this force was distributed in different posts; and, as some

have objected, this was done with but little skill. With the remainder, and 150 men from the navy, it was determined to assault the positions held by the rebels, at Belvidere and Morne Vauclain. It is asserted, that the officers strongly remonstrated against this measure; and represented to the president that, the roads having been entirely broken up by continued rains, it would be exceedingly imprudent to venture on an attack before the ground became more dry, and the weather more settled; but that he was deaf to their remonstrances, and obstinate in his opinion that an immediate attempt should be made. It was accordingly made, on the 8th of April, and the result was such as had been predicted. The troops behaved with their accustomed bravery, but the post had been strengthened by abbatis, and by every possible means of repulse, so that the assailants, embarrassed in the muddy soil, or unable to keep their footing on the slippery precipices, were slaughtered with impunity by an almost invisible foe, and were at length compelled to retire with the loss of more than 100 men in killed and wounded. Captains Stopford and Hewan, and Ensign Baillie, were among the slain.

The British prisoners, to the number of fifty, who had been taken at an early period of the insurrection, were put to death in the camp, on the morning of this disastrous attack. This act of

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horrible barbarity has been ascribed to different motives, by different people. Some have attributed it to the feelings of revenge excited in Fedon, by the loss of his brother; while others have maintained that it was committed as a retaliation for the death of a M. Alexandre, who had been executed as a traitor, by order of the president, though he was not an English subject, and consequently not amenable to our civil laws. Whatever was the motive, there can be no doubt as to the magnitude of the crime.

The president seems at last to have thought it prudent to resign into abler hands the controul over military operations. He, in consequence, wrote to desire that an officer, vested with full authority, might be sent from Martinico. Brigadier-general Nicholls was chosen for this purpose, by Sir John Vaughan, and he landed in Grenada about the middle of April. Having investigated the state of affairs, he called in the useless posts, and prepared to recover Pilot Hill, in the neighbourhood of Grenville. The rebels, however, did not wait his attack, but retired to their camp at Belvidere. He next embodied all the trust-worthy negroes, and followed up this step by placing detachments at St. Patrick's, St. David's, Charlotte-town, and Grenville, in order to prevent succours from being thrown in by the republican vessels. This latter wise precaution tended greatly to distress the rebels, and even to

reduce their numbers; as many of them laid down their arms, rather than encounter any longer the severe privations to which they were exposed. Before the end of June, most of the slaves in the windward part of the island had returned to their estates, and signs of cultivation and commercial spirit began once more to appear.

The terrible ravages made among the troops, by disease, unfortunately disabled the general from acting with the requisite vigour. So fatal was the fever that, in three months, the British force was diminished by more than one half. The rebels, on their side, cooped up in the interior, and scantily provisioned, did not display any extraordinary daring. Frequent skirmishes, nevertheless, occurred, in which they were always defeated. In one instance, towards the end of June, Fedon himself, at the head of a division of picked men, was routed with considerable slaughter, by a detachment under the orders of Lieutenant Hinnuber, of the 68th regiment.

Affairs continued in this situation till October, on the 10th of which month, in spite of the ports being carefully watched, two corvettes from St. Lucia contrived to land 200 men, and some supplies, the whole of which arrived without opposition in the rebel camp. This timely succour roused the courage of the insurgents, and stimulated them to undertake offensive operations, in

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the hope of enlarging their present narrow bounds. On the 15th, favoured by an extremely dark night, they attacked and carried the works on the hill above Charlotte-town. Lieutenant-colonel Schaw, who commanded in the town, made an effort to recover the lost ground; but it was a fruitless one; the steepness and slipperiness of the hill, and the strength of the enemy, rendering it impossible for the troops to gain the summit of the ridge. The town having now become untenable, he was under the necessity of retiring to St. George's, leaving behind him the women, and the sick in the hospital. Of the sick many died from the want of medical assistance; the women were returned unhurt, to the nearest British post.

It was not till the latter end of December that any thing of moment occurred. The rebels then twice attempted to make themselves masters of Pilot Hill. In both these attempts, however, they were frustrated, with serious loss on their side, and little on our own. These were the last military events which took place, in the year 1795, in the colony of Grenada.

In the rest of the predatory enterprises which he undertook during this year, Victor Hugues was not equally successful. Its proximity to Guadaloupe, and the disaffection of many of the French inhabitants, a disaffection which seems indeed to have been hereditary, led him to hope that

an attack upon Dominica would have a favourable result. His hopes were probably heightened by a knowledge of one important fact, namely, that there was not on the island more than a single company of regular troops. On the fifth of June a republican party, of between two and three hundred men, landed, from Mariegalante, on the northern coast of Dominica. As soon as this invasion was known, the British inhabitants flew to arms with a praise-worthy alacrity and courage, and marched towards their enemies, whom they found near Pagua. They attacked them vigorously, and, after several skirmishes, drove them from their position, and compelled them to take shelter in the woods. In the mean time, another body of republicans, about 300 in number, effected a landing at some distance from the scene of action, and endeavoured to form a junction with their companions; while in another direction, 160 French planters, of Callihaut quarter, rose in arms, and put themselves in march to join their worthy allies. These latter, however, having wandered from their right road, were unable to accomplish their purpose.

By the judicious dispositions of Captain Bathe, the hostile divisions were kept separated, and were both so closely invested in their camps, that, being cut off from all supplies, the two republican officers, on the 17th and 19th of June, were compelled to surrender. The rebels, being

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thus left to their own efforts, were under the necessity of following the example which had been set them by their friends. They endeavoured to obtain a promise of pardon, but no terms were allowed to them. It would, in truth, have been highly impolitic to grant impunity to this abortive but malignant and dangerous rebellion against the British authority. Many were, therefore, punished with the severity which they deserved, and still more were banished from the colony.

The conduct of the militia, during this short yet active and fatiguing contest, was deserving of the highest praise. The negroes, too, behaved generally with a fidelity and zeal, which merited the gratitude of their employers. In hunting down such of the invaders as had taken refuge in the woods, their services were eminently useful. So much on the alert were the British and their black auxiliaries, that not a single man, of those who had been landed, escaped from death or capture; and of the rebels only twenty-five, who put to sea in a large canoe, are said to have succeeded in eluding the vengeance of their irritated pursuers.

The colonists likewise carefully guarded their coast by armed vessels; and this prudent measure saved them from a repetition of the toil and danger which they had so recently encountered. Two reinforcements were dispatched by

Ports of the United Kingdom, from the British

of the principal Articles of West-India Produce

Fustic				Logwood				Mahogany				Cotton Wool.
Tons	Cwt	qrs	lbs	Tons	Cwt	qrs	lbs.	Tons.	Cwt	qrs	lbs	lbs
—				—				—				6,669
—					8	7		5	9	1	22	602,588
—				—				—				284
8	16		27	—	19			1	4	1	27	804,410
2180	9	2	19	9,638	12	1	12	1,396	9	2	17	1,021,674
—				—				—				5,078
—				—				—				1,492
—				—				—				—
9	9		9	102	3		26	—				10 30
—				—				—	14	1	11	168,592
—				—				—	18	1	23	3,20
26	11	3	11	—				—				149,276
30	5	2	12	—				—	1	1	9	303,045
1024	1	2	17	78	7		22	76	6	3	12	336,32
—				9	9	1	10	—	15	1	15	1,61[illegible]
—				—				—				6,462,52[illegible]
—				—				—				2,854,579
—				1,592	14		7	10,844	17	3	18	—
3278	13		11	11,430	12		21	12,326	17	3	14	12,731,9[illegible]2

Victor Hugues to his partisans in Dominica, and, had not the rebellion been suppressed, they might have turned the scale in its favour; but, on approaching the shore, their leaders discovered that all was lost, and that the colonists were prepared for a vigorous resistance. Under these circumstances they deemed it more advisable to put back to Mariegalante, than to persist in an enterprise which seemed likely to terminate in nothing but captivity and disgrace.

After this event, Dominica was allowed to remain in a state of tranquillity. Towards the close of the year, the colonists were, indeed, alarmed by a rumour, that a French corps, invited over by some traitors, had secretly landed, and taken post in the mountains. All the interior wilds of the country were, in consequence, minutely examined by the British troops; and the result of this search dissipated all anxiety, by proving that the rumour had no other ground than the fears, the falsehood, or perhaps the wishes, of those persons by whom it was originally made public.

It is, however, not improbable that the report was spread by the friends of the republicans, in order to draw the attention of the British from a quarter which was really menaced. Victor Hugues was at this moment meditating an attack upon the colony of Martinico. To have recovered that island, or even to have made

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it the seat of war, would have put the seal to the reputation which he had acquired during this campaign. The chance of failure was, indeed, very great, as our principal strength was collected there; but he was not a man to hesitate, for a single instant, at putting much to the risk on his own part, when there was a probability that serious injury might be inflicted upon those who were opposed to him. His possession of St. Lucia also rendered less difficult his project of invasion, as, since his re-capture of that island, Martinico might be said to be placed between two fires. It was invested on the one side by St. Lucia, and on the other by Guadaloupe.

His plan was, to throw at first small divisions into various parts of the island, for the double purpose of dividing the attention of the British, and spreading more widely the flame of insurrection. These having once gained a footing, a larger force was to have been landed from Guadaloupe, to follow up the blow. In pursuance of this plan, a motley group, consisting of about 160 men, of all colours, with four field pieces, 700 stand of arms, and abundance of ammunition, stole secretly over from St. Lucia, in the night of the 7th of December, and disembarked in the bay of Vauclain. They immediately took post on a hill, which rises above the village. The Earl of Dalhousie, who was then stationed, with a detachment of the Queen's

regiment, a few miles from Vauclain, was soon informed of this event, and he hastened, with a small party, to repel the invaders. He drove them from the hill, and they then established themselves in the village church, which was surrounded by a high wall. In an endeavour to drive them from this position, his lordship was wounded and repulsed, with the loss of fifteen men. Four and twenty hours, however, did not elapse before the republicans were hemmed in by the militia, who poured in from all quarters. From the church the enemy, nevertheless, contrived to escape, but their flight was unavailing. They were hotly pursued, many of them were put to the sword in their retreat towards the woods, and those who did reach the woods were ultimately hunted down by the troops which were in chase of them. The pocket book of the commander is said to have been found, containing a list of those colonists by whom they expected to be joined. It is asserted also, that previously to their marching, the militia shot twelve men of their own body, whose republican principles they had fortunately detected. The colonists of Dominica displayed, on this occasion, the same spirit which had animated them when their island was invaded. Since the descent in June, they had raised a negro corps; and of this corps they sent two companies over to Martinico, as soon as they

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received intelligence of the landing of the enemy. The prompt destruction of the hostile division had, however, left nothing to be done by this friendly aid.

The discouraging issue of his first attempt, the subsequent capture of a schooner with men and arms, which he had dispatched on the same errand, and probably also the belief that, to defend what he now held, he should speedily stand in need of all his resources, induced Victor Hugues to desist from hazarding any thing further for the re-conquest of Martinico.

Here, then, terminates the history of the campaign of 1795; the military proceedings in Jamaica and St. Domingo having already been narrated in the third volume. On taking a review of this campaign, it seems impossible to deny that it was disgraceful as well as disastrous to the British arms. At the close of it the enemy will be found to have re-captured one important colony, to have held divided sway with us in two more, the whole of which they had rendered for a while useless to us, and to have spread great alarm in two others, in one of which they had put the colonists to infinite labour and expense; while, on our side, we had not gained from the republicans a single inch of territory. They had carried on the war wholly upon our ground, and at our cost. To all this must be added the heavy loss which we sus-

tained in men, and the heavy expenditure which was incurred, to support a war at such a distance from the parent country. It is, perhaps, not difficult to discover the cause of our reverses. There was no want of discipline and boldness in the troops, nor of valour and intelligence in their officers; but in those who were at the head of affairs there appears to have been a lamentable want of vigilance, of foresight, and of vigour. There was no presiding and powerful mind, to direct to a beneficial purpose the talents and energies of the subordinate actors. Nor did censure fall on the military operations alone. It was loudly asserted, by many of the colonists, that our naval arrangements were equally defective. They complained, and with much bitterness of spirit, that, notwithstanding the superiority of our fleets, the republican vessels kept the sea with almost perfect impunity, chose whatever points of attack they pleased, ruined by their numerous captures the commerce of the islands, harassed and depressed the inhabitant by continual alarms, and actually, to a certain degree, fed the war on their own part, and starved it on ours, by intercepting the reinforcements of men and arms, which were supplied from England. Though, as is usually the case with those who are suffering, it is probable that in these complaints there was somewhat exaggerated, it is but too certain that the complaints

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were founded on fact; and that Victor Hugues did not without reason pride himself on the vast extent of his maritime depredations, and on the facility and comparatively trifling loss with which they had been effected, in spite of the presence and strength of the British cruizers in the Charibean seas.

CHAPTER VI.

A formidable expedition prepared in England for the West Indies.—Disasters sustained by it at sea.—It arrives at its destination in April.—Capture of Demarara and Berbice.—Conquest of St. Lucia, after a severe struggle—Proceedings in St. Vincent's and Grenada previously to the arrival of the expedition.—Those two Islands are at length freed from the enemy.—Attack of Victor Hugues upon the Island of Anguilla.

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THE mortification which, in common with every Englishman, the ministers felt at the bad success of our late military proceedings in the Western hemisphere, was, no doubt, exceedingly increased by the perpetual goading of their political antagonists, who loudly attributed to their negligence and incapacity all the disasters which had befallen us. In order, therefore, to restore the lustre of our arms, the cabinet, in the summer of 1795, came to the resolution of sending out such an armament as should not only be capable of delivering our own colonies from annoyance, but also of rooting out the republicans and their allies from those islands and settlements which were still in their possession. Twenty-seven

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thousand men, divided into two bodies, one of them 15,000 and the other 12,000 strong, was the number originally destined for this service. Of this army a part was to sail from England, and the remainder from Ireland. Sir Ralph Abercromby was appointed the commander-in-chief; and, as his talents were unquestionable, this appointment gave reason to hope that we should at length have the satisfaction of taking an ample revenge upon our enemies for their recent triumphs. It appears, indeed, to be almost certain that, had the whole of this expedition arrived at an early period in the West Indies, the republicans would have been much too weak to make, in any quarter, an effectual stand against its overwhelming strength. But it happened in this instance, as it had happened before, that, previously to the time of its departure, the original force was frittered down, by diverting portions of it to other objects, till it became inadequate to the full accomplishment of the great purpose for which it had been assembled.

It was not till towards the close of autumn that the necessary preparations were completed. Had no accident subsequently intervened, this was early enough for the troops to have reached the West Indies in time to open the campaign at the commencement of the healthy season. We shall soon, however, see with what calamitous difficulties this ill-fated expedition was des-

tined to encounter. The convoy, which consisted of more than two hundred sail of transport and other vessels, departed from Spithead, on the 15th of November, under the command of Admiral Christian. Scarcely had the fleet fairly got into the channel when a furious storm arose, which scattered the ships, and stranded many of them on the Dorsetshire coast. For several leagues, the shore, thickly strewed with wrecks and corpses, presented an appalling spectacle. This misfortune compelled the convoy to return to Spithead. Early in December it a second time sailed from thence, and a second time it was met by a tempest, which drove numbers of the vessels to take shelter in any port that they could find. Still, Admiral Christian, with the main body of the convoy, contrived to keep the sea, and, in spite of adverse gales, had made some progress, when a third storm compelled him to give up the contest, which had lasted fifty days, and return to England. The same fate attended the convoy from Cork, which was also driven back into port. Some few transports, however, belonging to Admiral Christian's squadron, were lucky enough to weather the hurricane, and to effect their passage to Barbadoes, with about 1,800 or 2,000

As it was of importance that he should be early on the spot, to make the necessary arrange-

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ments, General Abercromby, with his staff, sailed in the Arethusa, on the 14th of February, and landed at Barbadoes on the 17th of March. At length, in the latter end of February and the beginning of March, the convoy, in three divisions, quitted the British and Irish shores, and, before the middle of April, it arrived in safety at the place of its destination. Independently of the loss of time occasioned by these untoward events, a loss not to be repaired, there was another evil consequence, of hardly less magnitude, arising from the protracted detention of the troops in the transport vessels; this was, that many of the men sickened on the voyage, and that others, though apparently in health, contracted a predisposition to disease, which could not fail to be productive of future bad effects, during a fatiguing service in an unusual and unhealthy climate.

The colonies of Demarara and Berbice were the first objects against which the British force was employed. A body of 1,200 men, under the command of Major-general Whyte, escorted by four frigates, was dispatched for their reduction by the general-in-chief, almost immediately on the arrival of the convoy in the West Indies. Very favourable terms were offered to the governor and the military, in the event of their ready submission. As the means of defence possessed by the colonists were but small, and

probably their inclination to avail themselves of them was still less, they readily accepted the beneficial offers which were made to them. Demerara and Essequibo were consequently surrendered to us on the 22d of April, and their example was followed by Berbice, on the 2d of May.

Had the force now ready for action in the Charibean islands been as large as it was originally intended to be, it is probable that the British general would have commenced his operations by striking at once at the root of the mischief, and thus, by the reduction of Guadaloupe, affording future security to our colonies, and, in a great measure also, to that extensive commerce to which they give birth. Under the present circumstances, however, all thoughts of reducing Guadaloupe were relinquished, and it was resolved that St. Lucia should be our primary object of attack. This island could now muster for its defence about 2,000 well disciplined black soldiers, a number of less effective blacks, and some hundred whites, who held positions both naturally and artificially strong, and were plentifully supplied with artillery, ammunition, and stores.

The post on which the republicans chiefly confided for their defence was that of Morne Fortune. It is situated on the western side of the island, between the rivers of the Carenage

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and the Grand Cul de Sac, which empty their waters into bays bearing the same name. Difficult of access by nature, it had been rendered still more so by various works. In aid of this, they had also fortified others of the mornes, or eminences, in its vicinity. The whole of this position, embracing a considerable extent of ground, it was of the utmost importance to invest closely, with as little delay as possible, that the enemy might not escape into the rugged country of the interior, and thus be in a condition to carry on a protracted and harassing war, which experience had already more than once proved to be highly detrimental to an unseasoned invading force.

To accomplish this desirable purpose, the British general determined to direct his troops on three points, two of them to the north, and the third to the south of the Morne Fortune. The first division was to land most to the north, in Longueville Bay, covered by several vessels, which were intended to silence the batteries on Pigeon Island. Choc Bay was the spot where the centre division was to be put on shore; and the third was to disembark at Ance la Raye, some distance to the southward of the hostile post.

The troops sailed from Marin Bay in Martinico, on the afternoon of the 26th of April, and arrived off St Lucia on the evening of the same

day. Seventeen-hundred men, under the command of Major-general Campbell, composed the first division, which was immediately landed in Longueville Bay, without encountering any further opposition than a few shots from the battery on Pigeon Island, the fire of which was speedily silenced by that of the ships. A strong current had driven the transports so far to the leeward that it was not practicable to land the centre division till the following morning. Major-general Campbell was, meanwhile, on his march, and his progress was only feebly opposed by about 500 republicans, who ultimately retired from Angier's plantation, to Morne Chabot, and allowed him to effect a junction with the centre division. The current having acted still more powerfully on the vessels which conveyed the third division, under Major-general Morshead, two or three days elapsed before the disembarkation in Anse la Raye could be entirely executed. The troops at length took up their appointed station, and thus held Morne Fortune invested on its southern side.

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To complete the investment on the northern quarter, it was necessary to obtain possession of Morne Chabot, which was one of the strongest posts in the vicinity of Morne Fortune. At midnight of the 27th, therefore, two columns, under Brigadier-generals Moore and Hope, were dispatched to attack the Morne, on two opposite

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sides, and, by this means, not only to carry the position, but likewise to preclude from escape the troops by which it was defended. This plan, the complete success of which would materially have diminished the strength of the republican force, was in part rendered abortive by a miscalculation of time. The column of General Moore, consisting of seven companies of the 53d regiment, led by Lieutenant-colonel Abercromby, 100 of Malcolm's rangers, and 50 of Lowenstien's, advanced by the most circuitous route; and, misinformed by the guides, it fell in, an hour and a half sooner than it had expected, with the advanced picket of the enemy, who were thus put upon their guard. At the moment when they were discovered, the troops, in consequence of the narrowness of the road, were marching in single files, and to halt them was impossible. In this state of things their leader, no less wisely than bravely, resolved not to give his opponents time to recollect themselves, but to fall on them with his single division. The spirit of the soldiers fully justified the gallant resolution of their commander. Having been formed as speedily as the ruggedness of the ground would admit of, they proceeded to the assault. The republicans made a hard resistance, but it was an unavailing one, as they were finally driven from the Morne with considerable loss. Nevertheless, as the second column did not arrive till the contest was over,

the fugitives succeeded in making good their retreat. In this sharp service, where all were praiseworthy, Lieutenant-colonel Ross particularly distinguished himself by his intelligence and zeal. On the following day, the victors also occupied Morne Duchasseaux, which is situated in the rear of Morne Fortune. In the hope of obtaining some advantage to counterbalance this misfortune, the enemy, on the 1st of May, made a brisk attack on an advanced post of grenadiers. They were, however, repulsed with much slaughter, but not till fifty men on our own part had been slain or wounded.

At the south side of the base of Morne Fortune the enemy had erected batteries, which precluded any vessels from entering into the bay of the Grand Cul de Sac. To open this bay to our fleet was an object of much importance, as at present it was necessary to convey the artillery and stores from a great distance, which could not be done without the previous labour of opening roads through an almost impracticable country. It was, therefore, resolved to make an attempt on these batteries. The principal attack was to be conducted by Major-general Morshead, whose division, in two columns, was to pass the river of the Graud Cul de Sac; the column of the right at Cools, and that of the left at the point where the waters of the stream are discharged into the bay. To second this force, Brigadier-

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general Hope, on the night of the 2d of May, was to advance from Morne Chabot, with 350 men of the 42d regiment, the light company of the 57th, and part of Malcolm's corps; the whole being supported by the 55th regiment, which was posted at Ferrand's. A part of the squadron was likewise to lend its assistance, by keeping up a cannonade on the works of the enemy. Before the time arrived for putting this plan into execution, Major-general Morshead was taken ill, and the command devolved upon Brigadier-general Perryn. No change, however, took place in the arrangements which had been formed.

At dawn of day, the division under Brigadier-general Hope began to accomplish its part of the service, by carrying the battery Seche, which was situated within a short distance of the works of Morne Fortune. The assailants suffered so little in the assault, that they would scarcely have had any thing to regret, had it not been for the fall of the gallant Lieutenant-colonel Malcolm. On the south side of the Morne, and at the extremity of the line of attack, Colonel Riddel, who led the column of the left, made himself master of the battery of Chapuis, and established himself there. Had the remainder of the project been as well executed, the purposed object would have been completely attained. Unfortunately, however, from some unexplained cause, the division which

was the connecting link of the whole, that which was entrusted to Brigadier-general Perryn, did not perform its allotted part, by passing the river at Cools. The consequence of this was, that the victorious columns were left insulated, and would have been exposed to no trivial danger, had the enemy felt a sufficient reliance upon their own strength to incite them to act with the requisite promptitude and vigour. Painful, therefore, as it was to retire before a routed foe, the British troops were compelled to abandon the batteries which they had won, and to fall back upon their original stations. The ships at the same time returned to their former anchorage. Our loss on this occasion was 105 men; of whom only a very few were among the slain. CHAP. VI. 1794

The Vigie was the sole post in the neighbourhood of Morne Fortune which was yet occupied by the enemy. It consists of a hilly peninsula, forming the north side of the Carenage, and connected with the land by a slender isthmus. This post was apparently not held by more than 150 or 200 men; and as the possession of it would cover his right flank, materially shorten the line of attack, and in some degree open to him the Carenage, General Abercromby resolved to endeavour to dislodge the republicans from it. As the narrow neck by which it must be approached was commanded by three of the batteries on Morne Fortune, the attack was fixed to take

place on the night of the 17th of May. The 31st regiment, as being the nearest at hand, was
1795. chosen for this purpose.

At the outset every thing promised that the result would be favourable. A battery of three eighteen pounders was carried, after a feeble resistance, and the guns were spiked and thrown over the precipice. On the summit of the hill, however, there still remained a large gun and a field piece, from which a constant fire was kept up by the garrison. The British troops pushed forward to complete their work, by the capture of these; but, at this critical moment, the guide was wounded, and they were in consequence unable to discover the path which led to the spot where the enemy were posted. A pause, of course, ensued, and during this time, such was the carnage made by the continued vollies of grape shot, that Lieutenant-colonel Hay was under the necessity of ordering the regiment to retreat. In killed, wounded and missing, the loss was scarcely less than 200 men. It would probably have been more severe, had not Lieutenant-colonel Macdonald advanced with a part of the grenadiers, to cover the retreat.

These checks were, no doubt exceedingly mortifying, and were much to be lamented, as having occasioned the fruitless death of many brave soldiers. They did not, however, interrupt, nor even slacken, the preparations for reducing

the enemy's main position on the Morne Fortune. The task which the British had to perform was attended with no small difficulty. The country itself was of the most inaccessible kind, the chain of investment was ten miles in extent, all the roads that were necessary were to be made, of carriages there were none, horses were scarce, and the republicans had been industrious in availing themselves of all the natural obstacles to our progress, and in creating as many others as their ingenuity could contrive. Yet, notwithstanding all this, the works against the Morne were pushed forward with unremitting diligence. It was from the ridge of Duchasseaux, against the north side of the enemy's entrenchments, that the principal attack was carried on.

The first parallel was completed on the 16th of May, and eighteen pieces of ordnance were opened from it against the Morne. In the course of a week the second also was finished, and every thing was in readiness to make a lodgement for the third. On the morning of the 24th, therefore, the 27th regiment, led by Major-general Moore, and supported by the 53d and 57th, attacked the republican advanced posts, and succeeded in effecting a lodgement on two points, the nearest of which was within 500 yards of the fort. The enemy, conscious that they were playing their last stake, made a desperate effort to

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regain their ground. Their exertions were unavailing. They were twice repulsed, by the 27th, with considerable loss. Before night, the troops were safely covered, the communications were established, and two batteries, each of them for eight pieces of artillery, were begun, for the purpose of battering in breach.

The governor had now held out as long as prudence would justify his resistance. Hemmed in on every side by a much superior force, and having no hope of relief, it would not have been courage in him but temerity had he run the risk of an assault. As soon, therefore, as he found that the besiegers could not be driven from the lodgements which they had made, he requested a suspension of arms, which was granted for only a few hours. The conferences ended in terms of capitulation being agreed upon. Two thousand men marched out, on the 26th of May, as prisoners of war. Nearly a hundred cannon and mortars, large quantities of ammunition and stores, and 10 vessels of different sizes, fell into the hands of the besieging army.

The difficulty of accomplishing this service has already been mentioned. It would, perhaps, have been insuperable, but for the strenuous assistance which was afforded by the navy. The artillery was advanced to the batteries by the labour of the sailors alone, and on every other oc-

casion, their co-operation when desired was always given to the fullest extent. The loss of the British was not trivial. It was little short of 600 men, in killed and wounded, of which number more than the common proportion consisted of officers.

The surrender of Morne Fortune put an end to regular military operations in the colony of St. Lucia. It did not, however, put an end to the dangers and fatigues of the victors, who had still services to perform, of a nature not less toilsome, though less splendid, than those which they had now completed. Sir Ralph Abercromby had, indeed, been successful in preventing the escape of the republican garrison into the interior of the island, but there yet remained at liberty many desperate characters, who were vehement partisans of the revolutionary system, and who, far from being disposed to submit to the British authority, flattered themselves that the arrival of succours from Guadaloupe would a second time enable them to expel us from the country. Incapable as they were of making any alarming effort, these men, nevertheless, continued to maintain a war of petty but wearisome annoyance; they murdered stragglers, burned plantations, committed numerous acts of plunder, and were the cause of considerable mortality among the troops, by keeping them incessantly on the alert in an unhealthy climate; nor was it till

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after much laborious exertion, and the lapse of several months, that the colony was at length restored to a state of tranquillity.

It has been seen, in the preceding chapter, that, at the close of 1795, the British and the republicans were struggling for superiority in St. Vincent's and Grenada. The narrative must now go back for a while, in order to make the reader acquainted with the events which occurred in those islands, previously to the tardy arrival of the succours from England.

In St. Vincent's, after the retreat of the republicans and Charaibes in September, the British troops advanced; but the rainy season, and other causes, prevented them from undertaking any thing of an important nature. At the opening of the year 1796, they were encamped, under Brigadier-general Stewart, at Colonarie, on the borders of the Charaibe country. This position, though otherwise a good one, is said to have had the serious defect of being much too extensive for the numbers by which it was held. Be this as it may, on the 8th of January, after having at various times made feeble attacks, probably with a view of discovering the weakest part, the enemy at length ventured on a decisive effort. There appears to have been an unpardonable want of vigilance displayed by the British on this occasion. At four in the morning, the enemy, guided by two deserters, surprised

and bayoneted the sentries on the left of the encampment, pushed forward undiscovered, and carried a battery which, from its steepness on all sides, was supposed to be nearly inaccessible. The first notice of their approach was the leaping of a French officer through the embrasures. While General Stewart was proceeding to reinforce the left, they impetuously attacked the center and right. They were finally successful on every side. The British gave way, all the batteries were taken, and the general had no resource but to retreat to Biabou, with the loss of his artillery, ammunition, provisions, baggage, and camp equipage. Nothing in fact was saved, except the remnants of the routed division. The killed, wounded and missing, in this unfortunate affair, were little short of 400 men; no officer was slain, but seventeen were wounded, among whom was Brigadier-general Strutt, who distinguished himself greatly, and, though twice severely hurt, did not retire from the field till his leg was shattered by a third shot.

The retreat was effected with some difficulty; the enemy hanging on the rear and right, and endeavouring to intercept the march, by occupying the different ridges which commanded the high road. They were, however, checked by the judicious conduct of Lieutenant-colonel Fuller, who had luckily moved that morning from Biabou,

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towards the scene of action, with about 200 men.

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After having halted for a few hours at Biabou, the British continued their retreat to Kingston, where consternation had already been spread by the news of their disaster. Major-general Hunter now found it necessary to abandon all the distant posts, and concentrate the remaining troops, for the defence of Kingston and the positions around it. He must even have narrowed his exertions still more, by withdrawing into Fort Charlotte, had not 260 men of the 83d regiment been dispatched to him from Barbadoes, as soon as information of the recent misfortune was received in that island.

In this painful emergency, the colonists themselves manifested a spirit which was highly honourable to them. Speedily shaking off those fears which had naturally been excited by the recent event, they took such measures as prudence dictated for the safety of the colony. Liberal bounties and other encouragements were offered to all volunteers who would promptly take up arms, and these offers were well seconded by the strenuous personal exertions of the principal proprietors. By this means several hundred volunteers were rapidly raised and embodied; and this defensive force was increased by the junction of all that remained of the southern regiment of

militia, the individuals of which, harassed as they had so long been, now once more willingly came forward at the call which was made on them.

The next action which ensued had not a favourable result for the enemy. On the 20th of January, before day break, a corps of 250 men, led by Lieutenant-colonel Prevost, endeavoured to surprise a post whence the enemy, with the mortars which they had taken at Colonarie, annoyed our position at Millar's ridge. The republicans were, however, too strong to be dislodged, and our troops, their commander having been twice wounded, were obliged to fall back to their works upon the ridge. Encouraged by this slight success, the enemy in their turn became the assailants. At day break they advanced against the post on Millar's ridge, and continued their attacks with great violence till nightfall, when, having been twice foiled in assaulting the redoubt, they returned to their former position. The number of their killed and wounded was not known; on our side it was nearly 60 men.

In proportion as the transports, which had braved the hurricane, reached the West Indies, small reinforcements were sent to St. Vincent's, which enabled General Hunter to prevent the republicans from accomplishing any further mischief. The British still kept their position on Millar's ridge, and their opponents were posted on a chain of heights, almost inaccessible, at

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about two miles distance. In this situation of things sharp encounters sometimes occurred, but nothing was undertaken on either side that could be productive of any decisive effects. The republicans were inclined to husband their resources, as they knew that they should shortly stand in need of all their strength to keep their ground; and the British did not think it politic to run any risks for an object which an overwhelming superiority of force would soon put it in their power to attain without any hazardous exertion. For some months, therefore, both parties rested on their arms, and waited the course which would be taken by events in other quarters.

In Grenada, meanwhile, the republicans and rebels had still less cause for exultation than their friends in St. Vincent's. They were successful in only one instance, and their success was of short duration. Having contrived to cut off the supply of water from Pilot Hill, they obliged Major Wright to abandon that post, on the 26th of February, and retreat to Sauteur. Sir Ralph Abercromby, however, on his arrival at Barbadoes, immediately turned his attention to Grenada, to which colony he dispatched Major-general Nicolls, with detachments from the 8th and 63d regiments, and a part of the 3d or Buffs. This succour was landed on the 23d of March, and its leader lost not a moment in

bringing it into the field. On the following day, he attacked the strong position of the enemy at Port-Royal. The contest was long and obstinate, and our troops fought under peculiar disadvantages. In the heat of the action a fire broke out in their rear, nigh the deposit of stores, and, before this danger was averted, two French schooners cast anchor in Marquis Bay, within shot of the republican entrenchments. At the critical moment when the hostile vessels entered the bay, General Nicolls ordered a vigorous assault on the post; and his orders were executed with so much spirit that, after having been repulsed in one trial, the troops at length gained the summit of the ridge, drove the republicans into their redoubt, and scrambled in after them, through the embrasures. The rout of the enemy was now complete. Some of them threw themselves down the precipices, and the remainder were so hotly pursued, that very few of them had the good fortune to escape. The result of this gallant attack was not only the possession of Port Royal, but also of Pilot Hill, which was instantly evacuated by the dispirited foe. Our loss was not inconsiderable; as it consisted, in killed and wounded, of 110 regulars, and 40 of the colonial troops.

Affairs were thus situated in the two islands when the fall of St. Lucia enabled Sir Ralph

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Abercromby to undertake the task of putting an end to the ravages of the enemy. In little more than a week all the needful arrangements were made, and the troops and artillery were embarked. The whole was ready to sail on the 3d of June. Kingston Bay was the place of rendezvous appointed for the division which was to act in St. Vincent's; Cariacou, one of the Grenadines, was that of the force intended for Grenada. The deliverance of Grenada was entrusted to Major-general Nicolls, who met the commander-in-chief, at Cariacou, in order to concert the plan of operations.

The troops disembarked in St. Vincent's on the evening of the 8th of June. They were put in motion on the following day, and before night they had reached their respective points of attack, opposite to which they were halted till the morning. Having, early on the 10th, turned the flank of the enemy, the British general then opened a fire, at 600 yards distance, from four cannon and two howitzers, against the Old Vigie, which was strongly entrenched. This cannonade was ineffectually continued for several hours. At last, as the decline of day was approaching, it became necessary to order an assault. It was executed by a part of the 42d regiment, the Buffs, and the York and Island Rangers, led by Major-general Morshead, who had volunteered

at an early hour to perform this service. The troops fell on with such determined bravery, that they drove the republicans from three redoubts in succession, and forced them to take refuge in the New Vigie, which was their principal post. As the retreat of the garrison was now entirely cut off, the commander, General Marinier, desired to capitulate; and the 700 men under his orders accordingly laid down their arms, as prisoners of war. Two hundred men, killed or wounded, of whom not more than forty were among the slain, was the price of this success.

Though the regular military force of the enemy had thus surrendered, the work of restoring the island to a state of perfect security was not yet completed. The Charaibes had escaped previously to the assault, and there still remained also many scattered bands of republicans in the uncultivated and mountainous parts of the country. By these fugitives a marauding and bush-fighting war was kept up for a few months longer. Major-general Hunter was, however, so indefatigable in his exertions, and tempered his vigour so well with humanity, that he at length succeeded in putting an end to the contest. Before the close of November, the Charaibes and their allies had all submitted, on the terms offered to them by the British commander. The Charaibes, including women and children,

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were in number nearly 5000; and the whites and people of colour amounted to scarcely less than 1000. As, after what had passed, it was much to be feared that the colonists could never again rely upon the fidelity of their uncivilized neighbours, it was finally resolved to remove the Charaibes from the colony, and they were, in consequence, conveyed with their families to the Island of Rattan, in the Bay of Honduras; a situation remarkably healthy, with excellent water and a fertile soil, producing in spontaneous abundance many of the necessaries of life.

Grenada was rescued from the enemy with still more facility than St. Vincent's. On the landing of Major-general Nicolls's division, which was disembarked at Palmiste, on the 9th of June, Captain Jossey, the leader of the republican troops, seeing that resistance must be unavailing, surrendered with his corps, as prisoners of war, and thus the British gained possession of the posts of Mabonia, Dalincourt, and Gouyave. Fedon, however, who did not dare to expect any mercy, was determined to hold out to the last extremity; and with this view he retired, at the head of about 300 men, to two strong and indeed almost unapproachable positions, called Morne Quaquo and Ache's Camp, in the mountains of the interior. In these recesses he did not despair of being able to tire out his pursuers. But in this

he deluded himself with vain hopes. General Nicolls did not give him time to throw any additional obstacles in the way of the troops. On the 18th of June, he dispatched against him, from opposite quarters, two divisions, under Brigadier-general Campbell and Count d'Heillemer, which were assisted by the advance of two smaller corps on other points. The dispositions were so admirably carried into effect, that the whole of the enemy's posts fell into our hands, nearly at the same moment, and with trifling difficulty. Many of the blacks were slain upon the spot, and the remainder were promptly hunted down in the woods by detachments of the military. No quarter was given to these ruffians, nor was any deserved by them, their last efforts having been marked by a foul and wanton murder. When they saw that their position at Morne Quaquo, which they had regarded as impregnable, was on the eve of being forced, they led out twenty white prisoners, stripped them, tied their hands behind them, and put them to death. It was impossible, after having witnessed this act of baseness and cruelty, that any thing short of their extermination should satisfy the victors. What was the fate of Fedon was never certainly known; but as a canoe, with a compass belonging to him nailed to the bottom of it, was found overset at some distance from the island, it was generally believed that he had been drowned

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while endeavouring to make his escape. To secure a few starving stragglers, and to execute justice on the captured rebels, was all that the colonists now had to do, and this we may be assured was no less cheerfully than it was effectually done, before the termination of the year.

In only one instance, during this campaign, did Victor Hugues undertake any operation against our colonies, and in that one instance both the design and the execution were such as to load his character with additional disgrace. Whether he had received any offence from the Anguillans, or whether he was prompted by the mere abstract love of mischief, does not appear; but, late in November, he dispatched 300 of his best soldiers in two ships of war and several small craft, for the purpose of reducing the petty and unguarded island of Anguilla, which is the most northerly colony of the Charaibean group. Nothing less than the extermination of the inhabitants is said to have been intended by Victor Hugues. The invaders found no difficulty whatever in making good their landing; and they seem to have been quite worthy of the mission on which they were sent. They seized on all private property, not leaving unplundered so much as the wearing apparel of females, they set the town on fire, and bayoneted and burnt in their houses several defenceless individuals, and

even children, and were preparing to carry their orders into complete effect when they were alarmed by the intelligence that a British force was approaching. An express boat with the news from Anguilla had fortunately reached St. Kitt's, just as Captain Barton, in the Lapwing of 28 guns, was entering the harbour of Basse Terre. Captain Barton immediately sailed to the relief of the terrified colonists. The wind, however, being against him, he could not come up in time to prevent the French from reimbarking, which they did on the night of the 26th. It would have been a mortifying circumstance had these dastardly marauders escaped the punishment which they deserved. Luckily they did not. On the following morning they were fallen in with by the Lapwing, and a sharp engagement ensued. After an action of an hour, the Valiant, of four guns, manned by 135 sailors and soldiers, ran on shore upon the island of St. Martin's, and was destroyed; most of her crew perished in attempting to swim on shore. The Decius, of 26 guns, held out for half an hour longer, and then struck. She was so crowded with troops, that she sustained the terrible loss of 80 killed and 40 wounded, and was in such a shattered state, that on the appearance of two large French frigates, Captain Barton deemed it prudent to take out his prisoners, and set her on fire.

Three other naval encounters took place this

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year, in all of which the British officers displayed so much gallantry, when opposed to a far stronger enemy, that it would be an act of injustice to pass them over in silence. The first of these happened in July, between L'Aimable of 32 guns, Captain Mainwaring, and La Pensée of 46 guns. The latter vessel was chased for several hours, but, after having been for a short time brought to close fight, she at length made her escape. The next was fought in August, off Basseterre, Guadaloupe, between the Mermaid of 32 guns, Captain Otway, and the Vengeance of 56 guns. It lasted half an hour, in the course of which the Vengeance was so roughly handled that she was obliged to be towed under the shelter of the batteries, closely followed by her antagonist, who did not desist till the cannonade from the shore rendered it impossible to advance any further. The Mermaid then lay to, with her topsails to the mast, out of reach of the batteries. Irritated by this humiliating spectacle, Victor Hugues, who had been a witness of the engagement, re-inforced the Vengeance with three boats full of men, and gave peremptory orders to her captain to "go out, and sink or bring in that corvette;" for so, from its smallness, he contemptuously denominated the British ship. The attempt was made, but Captain Otway and his brave crew gave the republican so warm a reception, that he was

speedily glad to take refuge once more under the guns of the forts; having, however, lost in this brief trial of strength and courage nearly 40 men. The third instance afforded a still more striking proof of our maritime superiority. This contest occurred, on the 23d of September, near Deseada, between the Pelican brig, of 18 guns and 96 men, Captain Searle, and the Medea French frigate, of 40 guns and 300 men. The great disparity of force induced Captain Searle at first to decline the combat; but, finding that the Medea had so much the advantage in point of swiftness that she was gaining fast upon him, he shortened sail, and determined at least to make the republicans purchase his vessel at as dear a rate as possible. Safety and honour were the reward of his courageous resolution. After the action had continued within musket shot for an hour, the enemy fell into confusion, and then made off to the northward under a press of sail, leaving the Pelican too much injured in her sails and rigging to admit of a pursuit.

By this campaign the reputation of the British arms was in a considerable degree retrieved. Though all was not accomplished that had originally been hoped for, much was undoubtedly done, and no disaster nor disgrace was sustained. One of the French colonies was reconquered, two of our own were cleared from the enemy, all were efficiently protected, and the

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rising settlements of Demarara and Essequibo were reduced under our authority. That more was not achieved, must not be attributed to those who commanded in the West Indies, of whom no one doubted the zeal and talent; but to those who ruled at home, and who, from whatever cause, failed in providing our military leaders with that plenitude of resources which was indispensably necessary to complete the great work of wresting from our enemies all their colonial possessions.

CHAPTER VII.

Capture of the Island of Trinidad.—Attempt upon Porto Rico.—Its failure.—Fruitless attack of the Spaniards upon Essequibo.—Treasonable plot discovered in Dominica.—Opposition of the Islands to a plan for raising Black Regiments.—Abortive attempt of the Spaniards against Honduras.—Capture of Surinam; of Curaçoa; of St. Bartholomew, St. Martin, St. John, St. Thomas and Santa Cruz; of St. Eustatia and Saba.—Conclusion of the War.

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With the year 1796 terminated the British schemes of conquest against the western colonies of France. Guadaloupe and Cayenne, which were in fact the only two of any consequence that the republic possessed, were allowed to remain henceforth unmolested by warlike operations. A new enemy had started up, and against that enemy our exertions, in the campaign of 1797, were entirely directed. Spain, recently the friend of England, was now become the ally or rather the tool of the French republic, she had commenced hostilities on the flimsiest pretexts, and the British cabinet, therefore,

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resolved that she should be made to pay the penalty of her impolitic connexion with our inveterate enemy.

The island of Trinidad, in the gulph of Paria, at a short distance from the continent, was the first object which the ministers marked out for attack. Independently of the magnitude and fertility of the island, which were sufficient motives for endeavouring to bring it under our dominion, it is probable that its proximity to the main land, which affords abundant facility to a valuable commercial intercourse, was a strong inducement for undertaking this enterprise. An opportunity was also offered of striking a blow at the Spanish navy; there being at this moment, in the bay of Shagaremus, a squadron, under Admiral Apodaca, consisting of three seventy-four gun ships, one ship of eighty guns, and a thirty-six gun frigate. As the admiral was in expectation of being attacked, he had moored his vessels in a line, and erected for their protection batteries of twenty cannon and three mortars, on the small island of Gaspar Grande, which covers the entrance of the bay.

Having collected the requisite forces from the various islands, Sir Ralph Abercromby sailed from Fort Royal Bay. On the evening of the sixteenth of February, the squadron, which was commanded by Admiral Hervey, reached its

destination, and its leader immediately moored it in such a position as to render it impossible for the enemy's fleet to escape. Every thing was now got ready for disembarking the troops on the following morning, when a simultaneous attack was intended to be made upon the town and the vessels. The Spaniards, however, did not think it prudent to wait the meditated blow. About two in the morning, flames were seen bursting forth from their ships; and the conflagration raged with such fury, that only one of the number, a seventy-four, could be saved from destruction. At the same time, the enemy evacuated Gaspar Grande, of which a party of the queen's regiment took possession at dawn. No opposition was made to the landing of the army, which was effected, in the course of the day, about five miles to the westward of the town. By night-fall, the British were masters of Puerto d'España and its neighbourhood, with the exception of two forts of small consequence.

On the ensuing day, Don Joseph Chacon, the governor, entered into a capitulation for the whole of the island. Two thousand two hundred naval and military troops laid down their arms, and became prisoners of war, on condition of being sent to Spain, as soon as transports could be provided for their conveyance. Nearly a hundred pieces of artillery, and an abundance of ammunition and stores, were given up to the

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victors. The conquest was almost a bloodless one; Lieutenant Villeneuve, of the eighth regiment, who died shortly after, being the only person who received a wound.

Not so fortunate was the next expedition which was undertaken by the British. Turning their views from the South American extremity to the center of that immense chain of islands which encircles the Charibean Sea and the Gulph of Mexico, they singled out the colony of Puerto Rico, as the second object of attack. That island, the fourth of the chain in point of size, is fertile, contained even then a population of nearly one hundred and forty thousand souls, and, under an enlightened government, might be raised to an eminent rank in the colonial scale. Independently of this consideration, there was another strong reason for making an effort to reduce it. The swarm of privateers, which found a shelter in its ports, severely annoyed the navigation from the Windward to the Leeward Islands; and this circumstance had more than once induced the planters to recommend that the conquest of it should be attempted.

The first blow of the invading force was designed to be struck against the city of San Juan, the capital, the fall of which, it was hoped, would ensure the submission of the colony. The city of San Juan is strongly situated, and its fortifications, which were constructed in 1765 by the

Count O'Reilly, render it nearly if not quite equal in artificial strength to the Havannah or Carthagena. It is built on a small island, which it almost fills; between this and the main land is a harbour, the two entrances of which are guarded by forts. The western entrance, or entrance of the port, is covered by the Moro castle, and by a fort called Canuelo, the latter of which is constructed on an insulated rock. The eastern entrance is narrower, and here the island is connected with the main land by a bridge; but all access is rendered difficult by the formidable forts and lines of San Christoval, San Geronimo, and San Antonio. The city itself is also defended on all sides by ramparts and by numerous small forts; and on the seaward side it has the additional protection of a rocky reef, which precludes approach. The garrison consisted of several thousand Spaniards, and three hundred French. The force which could be mustered in the whole of the island fell little short of sixteen thousand men.

Against a town thus fortified and garrisoned, the armament which was dispatched must undoubtedly be considered as inadequate. The troops consisted of only three thousand men, and a body of black pioneers. It has been insinuated, that the British commander expected to find auxiliaries within the place, and the smallness of his army gives probability to this idea;

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yet, even then, it was impolitic to undertake the enterprise with such scanty numbers as were not only incompetent to overpower resistance, but also insufficient to inspire with confidence the secret friends of the invader.

The army, commanded by Sir Ralph Abercromby, quitted Martinico on the eighth of April, and, after a delay of some days at St. Christopher's, for the purpose of procuring pilots and guides, the fleet reached Puerto Rico on the seventeenth, and anchored off Cangrejos point, about three leagues to the eastward of the town. As the reef of rocks, which has already been mentioned, stretches along the greatest part of the northern coast, it was with much difficulty that a narrow passage was discovered. The Fury and Beaver sloops and the light vessels passed through this channel, on the following morning, and the troops were disembarked. A detachment of two hundred of the enemy, who had concealed themselves in the bushes, made a trifling and fruitless opposition, and then fled; leaving behind them four pieces of artillery. The army, in the afternoon, took up a position, fronting the east end of the isle of San Juan; its right being to the sea, and its left to the lagoon of Martin Pebo, which extends from the harbour a considerable distance into the country. The head quarters were fixed at the episcopal palace of Cangrejos, which stands on a rising

ground. Every hand was busily employed, in getting up the cannon, and constructing the batteries. The advancing of the besiegers compelled the besieged to destroy one of their powder magazines, which was situated opposite to the town, on the peninsular point of Miraflores. To a summons which was now sent him, offering honourable terms, the governor, Don Raymond de Castro, replied by a decisive negative.

Don Raymond was not backward in taking measures to prove that he was in earnest in his refusal to capitulate. He proceeded vigorously in throwing up entrenchments, and covering the weak parts of the town by every other means in his power, that, in case the invaders should force an entrance into the island, he might still hold them at bay. On the side attacked, the bridge was broken down, and additional works were raised to obstruct the passage over the eastern channel. The communication of the town with the south and west of the country it was impossible to interrupt, so that there existed no hope of hemming in the Spaniards, and compelling them to surrender by means of famine. At the same time, the left flank of the British was incessantly harassed by the Spanish gunboats. The besiegers, nevertheless, kept up a heavy fire on the works, by which they greatly damaged the forts of San Geronimo and San Antonio; but, with all their exertions, they

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found it utterly impracticable to silence or even to balance the fire of the enemy; and they were, at length, under the necessity of relinquishing the project of penetrating, on this side, into the island of San Juan.

As no effectual impression could be made upon the works by a cannonade, the British general resolved to try whether a bombardment of the town would not intimidate the besieged into submission. A mortar battery was, therefore, erected on the point of Miraflores, and its fire was vigorously kept up for several days. The distance, however, was too great to allow of much injury being done to the town. The destruction of a magazine of provisions was nearly all that was accomplished.

The besieged were not as fortunate in their sallies as in their other modes of defence. On the twenty-fifth, they landed a division at Miraflores, but were defeated with considerable slaughter, and driven precipitately back to their boats. Four days subsequent, they ventured on another attempt, with far increased numbers, yet with the same ill success. This last sally was made by one thousand two hundred infantry and two companies of cavalry. It was vigorously repulsed by the besiegers, and one of the leaders of it was slain.

The siege had now continued nearly a fortnight, without the British having made any

apparent progress towards the attainment of their object. Nor did it appear at all probable that a continuance of their efforts would lead to a satisfactory result. Their own force was originally too scanty; that of the enemy was, on the contrary, continually increasing by succours from other parts of the island. Under these circumstances, Sir Ralph Abercromby determined to desist from an enterprise from which there was nothing to be hoped, and a certain loss to be incurred. The troops were accordingly reimbarked, on the thirtieth of April. The loss sustained during the siege was about two hundred and thirty in killed, wounded, and missing. Seven iron guns, four iron mortars, and two brass howitzers, which had been rendered unserviceable, were left behind, from the want of the means of removal.

The only other military event of this year occurred in January, and the Spaniards were the assailants. Hoping that the usual festivities of the Queen's birth-day would have disabled our troops from defending themselves, a party of Spaniards crossed the Orinoco, on the night of the nineteenth, with the intention of falling upon the outpost of Moroko, which lies at the extremity of the colony of Essequibo. Their calculations, however, were erroneous. They were perceived before they could effect their landing; the whole force of the post was immediately

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under arms; and the enemy were hotly received on their disembarkation. Unintimidated by this unexpected reception, they continued the contest for awhile with spirit; but they were finally routed, and compelled to take shelter in their boats with considerable loss. Only ten men were wounded on our side. This spirited defence was entirely made by a party of Dutch soldiers, under Captain Rochelle, who had recently been taken into our service; and it gave a satisfactory pledge of their courage and fidelity.

Ever on the alert to seize an opportunity of striking a blow at the British, and caring little by what means he effected his purpose, Victor Hugues early in the year formed a plan for making himself master of Dominica by dint of treachery. His agent on this occasion was a M. La Course, who carried on the plot at Dominica, furnished him with an exact account of the strength of the military force, and endeavoured to debauch the troops from their allegiance. So far was the scheme matured, that a day was even fixed upon, for a sudden descent of a large body of men, who were kept in readiness at Guadaloupe. The closeness of the two islands would have greatly facilitated the projected descent. Fortunately, the plot was discovered in time. A loyal soldier, who, by pretending to enter into the conspiracy, had been entrusted with the secret, and

who had received tempting promises of reward from the traitor, disclosed to the government the knowledge which he had obtained. La Course was instantly arrested, tried, and condemned, and Victor Hugues, finding that nothing could now be achieved by stealth, did not think it prudent to resort to an open attack. Dominica thus escaped the scourge which had been so severely felt by St. Vincent's and Grenada.

The terrible mortality which thinned the ranks of the European troops, induced the British ministers to think of reinforcing the army with men better calculated to resist the influence of a destructive climate. With this view, the West-India governors were instructed to bring forward, in the respective legislatures, a project for raising, in the Windward and Leeward Islands, five black regiments, consisting of five hundred men each, to become a permanent branch of the military establishment. The West-Indian proprietors were, however, both offended and alarmed by a scheme which seemed to them to be fraught with the most dangerous consequences. With the example of St. Domingo full before their eyes, they saw nothing but ruin and death in a proposal for putting arms into the grasp of slaves. They did not consider themselves as justified in hoping that negro soldiers would act with sepoy fidelity.

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Accordingly the plan met with determined hostility.

When, on the seventeenth of January, governor Ricketts communicated it to the House of Assembly in Barbadoes, and requested the concurrence of that House, the speaker, Sir John Gay Alleyne, immediately rose, and moved the three following resolutions; which were carried without a dissenting voice, and sent up to the governor, accompanied by an address of a similar tenor.

"That, the design of five regiments, &c. (as expressed in the message) will, as far as such a design is likely to affect this island, prove rather the means of its destruction than defence.

"That, as the able-bodied slaves that are the objects of the message are frequently of the worst of characters, it may eventually happen, that, after being disciplined, and arms put into their hands, they may turn them against the inhabitants of their native spot, not only to the murdering of their former owners, and the destruction of their estates and properties, but to wrenching the dominion of the colony out of the hands of the British empire.

"That should the colony be fortunate enough to escape the worst of those consequences, yet the lesser evil of negro-men being raised to a condition so superior to their fellow slaves, will

be severely felt, as lessening the bonds of that subordination which so happily subsists throughout the island; not less to the ease and comfortable support of the negro slaves themselves than to the profit and satisfaction of their various proprietors, spreading of course an universal discontent among the slaves, and too natural a distrust and dread among their masters."

The Assembly of Jamaica was no less decided and unanimous in its opposition to the measure. It refused to make any provision whatever for the subsistence of the sixth West-India regiment, which was commanded by Lieutenant-colonel Whitelocke. In this decision it was sanctioned by the general voice of the white population. Meetings were held in almost every parish of the island, in all of which the scheme of raising black corps was heavily censured, as being, in the first place, unnecessary, the negroes being already compellable to serve in case of emergency; and, in the second place, as being of a nature to produce ultimately, and perhaps at no distant period, the most destructive effects to the persons and the property of the colonial proprietors.

The fears excited in the minds of the colonists by this project were kept alive during the whole of the following year. The British ministers were reluctant to abandon that which appeared to be a cheap and ready mode of recruiting the army in the western hemisphere. The Assembly

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of Jamaica, however, remained firm in its opposition. It passed a resolution that, should the plan of embodying negroes, to act off the island, ever be carried into effect, it would be necessary for the House to adopt measures to prevent such negroes from returning to the colony. But, lest its resistance should be attributed to unworthy motives, the House, on condition that the negro plan should be relinquished, offered to be at the expense of raising four battalions, consisting of two thousand men, to be paid by the colonists, and applied solely to the defence of the island. The scheme of the Assembly was apparently well calculated to answer its intended purpose. It was proposed that the men should be enlisted under a promise that, at the expiration of a certain term, from five to nine years, they should be rewarded with small settlements in the interior of the country. In furtherance of the measure, the colonial agent in England was instructed to arrange with the ministers the means of procuring such men as were most suitable to the service, and also to send out the wives and families of the non-commissioned officers who were married. By this step, it was hoped, that not only would the military strength of the colony be sufficiently augmented, and that too with troops accustomed to the climate; but that much benefit would accrue from increasing the resident white population, and

bringing into a cultivated state some of the wilds of the interior. CHAP. VII. 1796.

What were the reasons which induced the ministers to reject this proposal, it would, perhaps, be useless to inquire. They did, however, reject it. But they were not unwilling to avail themselves of the pecuniary part of the scheme. In the place, therefore, of the battalions which the Assembly was desirous to raise, they offered to send the first and fourth battalions of the sixtieth regiment, the pay of which was to be furnished by the colony. This counter-project would not have been liable to much objection, had it not stipulated that the battalions should be changed at the pleasure of his Majesty. It is obvious that this stipulation opened a way for defeating more than one of the chief objects which the colonists had in view. The Assembly, nevertheless, being rejoiced at getting rid of the obnoxious negro scheme, did not hesitate to acquiesce in the new arrangement. At the same time, it expressed its reliance that, unless on some great emergency, in which the island itself should be implicated, the paternal solicitude of his Majesty for the welfare of the colony would prevent any such undesirable change from taking place. It justly observed, that the removal, which it so much deprecated, would entirely render nugatory its principal objects, which were two-fold; first, to obtain troops at once acco-

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tomed to the climate, and thoroughly acquainted with the country, and consequently with the best means of defending it from attack; and, secondly, to swell the numbers of the white residents, and to spread cultivation in the interior of the colony. Having thus stated its wishes, the Assembly concluded by ordering barracks to be built for the expected force, and by voting the sum of fifty thousand pounds, to provide for immediate pay, subsistence, and accommodation.

The fears occasioned by the plan for raising negro regiments had scarcely had time to subside, before they were again put into action by other circumstances. The evacuation of St. Domingo was now the exciting cause. The troops which had defended St. Domingo were, it was understood, to be landed in Jamaica; and among those troops were the negro corps, which General Williamson had embodied. Taking instant alarm at this intelligence, the House of Assembly sent a message to the governor, to inquire whether any black or coloured soldiers were intended to be conveyed into the island, and to request that he would forbid the disembarkation of every individual of that description. His lordship, in reply, declared his ignorance of any intention of the kind; and he endeavoured still further to tranquillize the House, by sending off all persons of whom it disapproved.

Another source of alarm almost immediately

arose. The abandonment of St. Domingo was necessarily productive of an extensive emigration from that island. Numbers of the planters, who had espoused our side in the contest, dreaded the vengeance of a triumphant and sanguinary foe, and they accordingly sought for a refuge in Jamaica, carrying with them such part of their property as they could save from the general wreck of their fortunes. From Jeremie no less than six hundred negroes were brought, and very many from Mole St. Nicholas. Nearly at the same time, it also happened that a mulatto regiment, called the Guadaloupe Rangers, originally intended for St. Domingo, but reaching it too late, was compelled to proceed to Jamaica, where it was put on shore on the first of December.

The House of Assembly was officially informed of these two events, by a message from the lieutenant-governor. It was assured that no delay should take place in the re-embarkation of the Guadaloupe Rangers. But with respect to the emigrants its kindness was bespoken for them, on the ground of their sufferings and merits; they having been the constant friends of order, and having a claim to the protection of the crown, and the hospitality of the colonists. As to the negroes, it was pleaded in their favour, that nothing could be feared from men who had given such a proof of their devoted fidelity as to prefer slavery under the British government,

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to freedom under that of the rulers of St. Domingo.

This language was by no means satisfactory to the legislature. It replied, that it sincerely pitied the French royalists, but that the interest of the colony must not be sacrificed to any theory, however liberal or dignified that theory might be, and that, as it saw infinite danger in the continuance of the slaves on the island, it was desirous of their speedy removal. Nor did it forget to remind the governor, that the military operations in St. Domingo had not been carried on for the benefit of Jamaica.

The governor did not allow this assertion to remain uncontradicted. He declared that, both according to the letter and the spirit of his Majesty's instructions, the posts lately evacuated in St. Domingo had been held solely as outposts for the security of Jamaica. He likewise again ventured to speak in favour of the emigrants, and, as an additional reason for tolerating them, he informed the Assembly that it was the royal intention to bestow upon them allotments of land in some part of the West Indies.

His arguments were urged in vain. They were, indeed, worse than fruitless. The fears of the legislature were so keenly alive, that, instead of pity, his repeated representations excited only an angry jealousy. The House appointed a committee to inquire into the subject, and the

report of this committee was made in terms of some asperity. It stated that, in violation of law, French slaves had been introduced into the island; that, however, the laws as they now stood were sufficient to rid the country of them; that the governor had given no assurance that their stay should not be continued; and that, from evidence taken before the committee, it appeared that the executive government had encouraged their being introduced.

As it was now obvious that an open quarrel with the Assembly would be the consequence of any further delay or remonstrance, the governor took immediate measures for removing the cause of dispute. The foreign negroes were sent from Jamaica; some being landed in Martinico, and others conveyed to the recently acquired colony of Trinidad. The emigrants, of course, did not remain behind, after their property had departed.

It is not easy to view without feelings of disapprobation the want of sympathy which seems to have been manifested, by the members of the Assembly, towards the fugitive planters from St. Domingo. A less rigid adherence to the cold maxims of a selfish prudence would, certainly, have been more honourable to their character, without being, perhaps, productive of any injury to their interests. Yet much allowance must be made for men placed in so delicate and perilous a

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situation as theirs. They may be said to have lived in the vicinity of a moral volcano, which every moment threatened to destroy them; and it was not unnatural that they should shudder at every thing which by any possibility could add to the danger, or accelerate the period of its arrival. Few persons have strength of mind enough to preserve dignity at the risk of safety.

It is highly probable that the Assembly would have been less urgent on this occasion, had not its alarms been recently increased by an event which, for a while, induced a belief that Jamaica was once more on the point of experiencing the same enormous losses, and witnessing the same disastrous scenes, as those to which it had, but a short time before, been exposed by the Maroon war. A negro, of the name of Cuffey, gathered together a band of runaway slaves, with which, in the month of February, he descended from his haunts in the Trelawny mountains, and committed depredations on the settlements in the neighbourhood. Their numbers having increased by June, they were the cause of much anxiety, and, as fear is a wonderful magnifier of dangers, they were even asserted to be more formidable than the Maroons had been. It does not, however, appear that the party under Cuffey ever consisted of more than forty-three men; but another party of thirty was said to be on foot in the same parish. So scanty was their portion of

courage that they were foiled in an attempt which they made to burn a lone house, defended only by two white men and a negro. Revenge seems to have been the prime or sole mover of their revolt; they having been heard to declare that, if they could but open their way to murder a master who had offended them, they would desist from their incursions.

Still, in a country where the torch of a single incendiary might spread devastation to an incalculable extent, it cannot be denied that the terrors of the planters were not without an apology. In order to concert measures for putting an end to these alarms and depredations, the House of Assembly was called together by Lord Balcarras, at the unusually early period of the 12th of June. When the members were met, his lordship informed them, that he looked upon the rebellion to be of an extremely dangerous nature; that he did not think either the militia or the regulars the best kind of force to cope with the insurgents; and that, therefore, it would be proper to employ the Accompong Maroons, who had always been immoveably faithful, and likewise to raise three companies of trusty negroes and free persons of colour, each company to consist of seventy privates, under white officers. The Assembly adopted his lordship's plan, and was then prorogued, after a sitting of eleven days. The plan was vigorously executed, and was so successful

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that, in a very short time, the rebels were entirely hunted down, and that part of the island was restored to tranquillity. There can, however, be little doubt, that the remembrance of this danger rendered the House of Assembly more pertinacious than it otherwise would have been, in its calls for the prompt removal of the St. Domingo negroes.

After the repulse at Puerto Rico, no military enterprize was undertaken, during the rest of 1797, and the whole of 1798, by the British. The French confined their exertions to preying on our commerce; and the Dutch were as incapable of effort as they were unwilling to attempt it, even had their capability been complete. The Spaniards alone roused themselves, in one instance, to something like aggression. But, though the means which they employed were far from contemptible, those means were ill seconded by the spirit and skill of the persons who employed them.

In the hope of driving the British settlers from Honduras, a possession always considered as an eye-sore by the Spaniards, Field-marshal O'Niel, the governor-general of the surrounding province of Yucatan, collected a force, consisting of two thousand troops and five hundred seamen, which he embarked on a flotilla of thirty-one vessels, of various sizes; nine of them carrying from twelve to twenty-two guns. Confident of success, or wishing, perhaps, to ensure it, the

field-marshal took the command in person. That a certain triumph was anticipated is indeed evident; for, in a canoe which was subsequently taken by one of our ships, letters were found which were directed to Spanish officers, who were supposed to be quietly in garrison in the settlement.

These expectations were in some measure justified by the scantiness of the British force, which was composed of only the king's sloop Merlin, four smaller sloops and schooners mounting altogether not more than fourteen guns, seven gun-flats with one gun each, and a body of militia and regulars, not equal in number to one-fifth of the assailants. It fortunately happens, however, that the coast of Honduras is protected by natural impediments, which render it difficult of access. The whole coast is thickly strewn with rocks, sand banks, and innumerable little islands, denominated keys, through which it can be reached only by certain intricate channels. Of these obstructions the British availed themselves in a judicious manner. On the land side, rivers, morasses and lagoons, interdicted all approach of the enemy.

The Spaniards had been so closely watched by the look-out boats, that every movement was known to the defenders of the settlement. Their flotilla arrived off the coast in the beginning of September, 1798. A part of it attempted, on the 3d, to force a passage to the northward, over Mon-

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tego-key shoals, and this attempt it renewed on the succeeding day; but the assailants were, in both instances, beaten back, though they were opposed only by gun-boats manned with colonial volunteers. The defeated vessels returned to the remainder of the squadron, which had anchored at some distance; and the British profited by their retreat, to remove and destroy the directing beacons and stakes, which the enemy had placed in the channel. On the sixth, with an addition of strength, they again made an attack, and were again repulsed with loss.

Finding that this entrance was impenetrable, the Spaniards turned their attention to the side of St. George's key, which lies to windward. On perceiving this movement, Captain Moss, in the Merlin, immediately sailed from Belize, and reached St. George's key by noon on the next day. The British squadron was then drawn up, directly abreast of the opening, with the Merlin in the centre. At the same time, lest the invaders should endeavour to effect a landing on the main land to the northward, Lieutenant-colonel Barrow took prompt and effectual measures for the defence of the settlement in that quarter.

It was not till the 10th that the Spaniards recovered sufficient spirit, or were sufficiently prepared, to recommence their attempts. At noon, nine of their largest vessels, with several

smaller, all crowded with men, bore resolutely down on the British squadron, by the aid of both sails and oars. The other ships lay at a distance, ready upon occasion to take part in the contest. The action soon began, and lasted two hours and a half, at the end of which time the Spaniards cut their cables, and went off in great confusion. Their flight was doubtless accelerated by the appearance of a reinforcement of small craft, with about two hundred men, from the shore. Such was the eagerness of the colonial militia to join their friends, that, on hearing that Captain Moss was engaged with the invaders, they hurried into whatever boats or canoes they could find, so as absolutely to impede the embarkation of the regular troops. Even the slaves were eager to take their share in the dangers of the day.

Thus foiled, the field-marshal hovered round the scene of action for nearly a week longer, and then led his baffled armament back to the ports of Yucatan; and so convinced was he of his inability to make any impression on them, that, for the remainder of the war, the settlers at Honduras were allowed to remain unmolested by any hostile enterprise.

An achievement which, towards the close of the year was performed by a small party of British soldiers and sailors, though not important from its magnitude or consequences, deserves

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notice as a splendid proof of courage, and as a striking contrast to the abortive attempt of the Spaniards upon Honduras. Finding that the privateers of the enemy, on the coasts of Cumana and Paria, eluded our cruizers, by taking shelter under the cannon of the forts of Rio Caribe and Gurupano, Captain Dickson, of the Victorieuse brig, resolved to destroy the forts and bring off their guns. This scheme was approved of by Colonel Picton, the governor of Trinidad, who ordered forty of the Royal Rangers to be embarked, under the orders of Major Laurel. The Victorieuse, in company with the Zephyr brig, then sailed to Rio Caribe, which they reached on the night of the third of September. At two in the morning, the troops and some seamen were landed, to assail the forts in the rear, while the brigs attacked them in front. The Spanish commandant, however, chose rather to give up his guns than to hazard a contest. Having accomplished this part of the service, Captain Dickson sailed to Gurupano, where he arrived in the afternoon. A French privateer was then at anchor in the harbour. A flag of truce was immediately sent in, to demand its surrender. Confident in his strength, the commandant answered, not only that he would protect the ship, but that the British must give up the guns that had been taken at Rio Caribe. He was soon taught another language. The

Rangers and thirty seamen were landed, to assault the forts, on which at the same time the vessels opened a warm cannonade. In ten minutes the lower fort was carried. The Spaniards also struck their colours on the upper fort, but the French hoisted theirs, and continued the defence. In five minutes more, however, the upper fort shared the fate of the lower. The victors dismantled the works, and carried off the artillery and the privateer. This gallant exploit was performed by a party not one-fourth as strong as that which it overcame; the Spaniards and French being at least three hundred in number.

The renewed war on the continent of Europe, and the necessity of making strenuous exertions in that quarter, was probably the reason that, in the year 1799, the British ministers did not push the war against the French and Spanish colonies on the American main-land, and in the West-India islands. Only one addition was made to our colonial territories in the western hemisphere, and that was effected rather by willing transfer, than by the prowess or dread of our arms.

The colony alluded to is that of Surinam: the inhabitants of which were not so blind to their interest as not to see that they were more likely to flourish under the powerful protection of England, than under the blighting influence of their own government, entirely vassal as that

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government was to republican France. Of the friendly sentiments of the colonists it is not improbable that our ministers were well informed. Be this as it may, they sent instructions to Lieutenant-general Trigge, to sail with a part of his force, for the purpose of obtaining possession of the colony.

As soon as the general had collected, from Grenada, St. Lucia and Martinico, the troops which were necessary, he embarked them in Port Royal Bay, on board of two sail of the line and five frigates, commanded by Lord Henry Seymour, who put to sea on the last of July. A vessel had previously been dispatched, to reconnoitre the coast, and to prevent intelligence from being conveyed to the point of attack. The squadron reached its destination, off the mouth of the river, on the sixteenth of August. Immediately on its coming to anchor, the general and admiral sent a message on shore, calling upon the governor to surrender. On his part there was no disposition to resist. Had there been any, the means were not wanting to second it; so far at least as to render the conquest not a bloodless achievement. After some amicable debating, however, as to the terms, which the invaders were, for more than one reason, willing to make as beneficial as possible, the capitulation was settled, and the town of Paramaribo, and the forts and redoubts in its vicinity, were directly given up to

the British. The colonial proprietors received their new masters with undisguised pleasure; and the Dutch troops entered into the British service with the same readiness which had been displayed by their countrymen at Demerara.

With one exception, the British colonies remained not only undisturbed but unmenaced, during this year. Nor in the occurrence which formed the exception was there much to be dreaded. Unable to make any impression by open force, the republicans found themselves obliged to resort to treachery; in which, however, they had no better fortune than attended them when they engaged in a more honourable mode of warfare. Jamaica was their object. General Romme, who had been sent from France as commissioner to St. Domingo, formed a plan for invading Jamaica, and for seconding his invasion, by means of an insurrection of the French prisoners and the negroes and Maroons. His agents, for spreading the flame of revolt in the island, were Sasportas, a violent jacobin, and Duboison, who had been a captain in Dessource's colonial regiment in British pay, and who, on the disbanding of the black troops by General Maitland, was induced to offer his services to the enemy. To their employer magnificent promises, as is always the case, were made by these emissaries, particularly by Sasportas, who used to undertake nocturnal excursions, in which he pre-

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tended to have produced wonderful effects among the Charles-Town Maroons and the slaves. To support the insurrection, which was to be thus brought about, General Romme exerted himself at Cape François, to raise several corps of troops, among which was one bearing the denomination of the *Legion Diabolique*, a name to which it would, doubtless, have endeavoured to prove that it had an undeniable title. In order to provide himself with transports, it was his intention to seize upon such American vessels as came within his reach. From Toussaint he wished to draw some military assistance, but the sable chief well knew that it was not to his interest to encourage the scheme; and, therefore, without directly censuring it, he contrived to elude a participation, by declaring that he could not spare any of his troops, and that, in fact, martial measures were unnecessary, as the purpose might at any time be accomplished by a few of his proclamations. Romme was thus left to his own resources.

Some mischief might, nevertheless, have been done, had not the government of Jamaica received timely intelligence of what was meditated. For this intelligence it was indebted to Mr. Douglas, who had succeeded Colonel Grant at St. Domingo, as commercial commissioner. By his thorough acquaintance with the French language and manners, Mr. Douglas not only ingratiated himself with Toussaint, but also with many

others, who had it in their power to give him information respecting the plans of the French rulers against the British colonies. In this way he managed to obtain some knowledge of General Romme's project. Eager to gain a perfect insight of it, he formed the bold and hazardous scheme of personally visiting the Cape. Toussaint endeavoured in vain to dissuade him from this perilous undertaking. He persisted; and, passing himself off as a Frenchman, and protected by the influence of Toussaint's name, he safely and fully effected his purpose. His dispatches enabled the government of Jamaica to seize the two spies, who were then on board a vessel in Kingston harbour, and even to secure the secret drawer containing their correspondence, plans, and other papers. He likewise contributed still further to frustrate the project, by warning the Americans of the general's intention of seizing their vessels.

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It does not appear that these miserable men had yet done much in furtherance of their master's scheme. A few stands of arms were dug up out of the sand, near Fort Charles, and a box of national cockades, which had been set afloat in the harbour, that it might find its way on shore, was picked up by a fisherman. Duboison saved his life by disclosing every thing that he knew. Sasportas was hanged at Kingston, and

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his execution was performed with as much solemnity as possible, in order to intimidate the Frenchmen who were then numerous in the town, and some of whom were suspected of at least viewing with too favourable an eye the sinister designs of their republican countrymen. The hopes and exertions of General Romme, whatever they may have been, expired with his agents.

The warlike operations of the year 1800 were confined to the conquest, or rather to the receiving the submission, of the island of Curaçoa. From that arsenal of mischief, Guadaloupe, a body of one thousand five hundred French troops was dispatched to seize upon the island, which seems hitherto to have preserved a sort of neutrality. The Dutch, however, were by no means pleased at the thought of being under the government of their Gallic friends; and they accordingly refused to submit to the invading force. Hostilities were in consequence commenced. Convinced that their own resources were not sufficient to bear them out in the contest, the Dutch, early in September, applied to the British for assistance, which was readily granted. Captain Watkins, in the Nereid, fortunately arrived at the critical moment when the enemy were preparing to storm the principal fort. The island was placed under the protection of his

Majesty, on very favourable terms; and the French, now hopeless of success, abandoned their enterprise.

The formation of the northern confederacy in Europe, furnished the British government, in 1801, with fresh objects of attack. Orders were in consequence sent out to the military and naval commanders, to reduce the Swedish colony of St. Bartholomew, and the Danish colonies of St. John, St. Thomas and Santa Cruz.

The force destined for this purpose consisted of the third and eleventh regiments of foot, the eighth West-India regiment, and a detachment of the Royal Artillery; the whole under Lieutenant-general Trigge. The squadron appeared before St. Bartholomew on the nineteenth of March, and as the island was wholly unprepared for defence, its military establishment consisting merely of twenty-one men, it surrendered at the first summons.

Having been joined, on the twenty-third, by a strong reinforcement from England, the commanders resolved to attempt the reduction of the neighbouring island of St. Martin's, in order to ensure the safety of their recent acquisition. St. Martin's was in the joint occupation of the French and Dutch; and it was not very probable that the French would be quiet neighbours, whatever the Dutch might be. The fleet stood into Little Cole Bay, on the morning of the

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twenty-fourth, and the troops were got ready for disembarkation. One brigade, of one thousand eight hundred men, was destined to attack Fort Chesterfield, near the town of Marigot, which is situated in the French quarter of the island. The second brigade, led by Brigadier-general Maitland, was to land near Fort Amsterdam, and to reduce that fort, and the town of Philipsburgh, in the Dutch quarter.

It was expected that the principal resistance would be made at Fort Chesterfield, but, contrary to this expectation, the enemy had concentrated nearly the whole of their force in the Dutch quarter. At first they seemed disposed to make a vigorous opposition. A large body of them with two field pieces, fell upon four companies of the sixty-fourth regiment, headed by Lieutenant-colonel Pakenham, and two companies of the eighth West-India regiment. They were, however, repulsed, with the loss of their cannon, and of fifty or sixty men. The West-India regiment, composed of new negroes, who had never before faced a foe, behaved upon this occasion with the utmost gallantry. This rude repulse had the effect of thoroughly discouraging the enemy; so that, before the close of the day, they laid down their arms, and the colony remained in the possession of the British. One privateer of twelve guns, and several vessels, fell into the power of the victors.

The general and admiral next proceeded to St. Thomas and St. John, and thence to Santa Cruz, all of which colonies submitted without attempting any resistance; the governors being not only without the means of resisting, but even ignorant that war was declared between Great Britain and the northern powers.

The last event which occurred during this war was the capitulation of the islands of St. Eustatia and Saba, which took place on the twenty-first of April. The French having quitted St. Eustatia, President Thomson of St. Christopher's lost not a moment in ordering Lieutenant-colonel Blunt to sail with a detachment to seize it, with the double view of giving security to the surrounding islands, and recovering a number of negroes who had eloped from St. Christopher's. A hundred men were deemed enough to execute this service. No attempt was made to oppose the British. Forty-eight pieces of cannon, of various calibres, were found upon the batteries.

The contest between England and France had now continued nearly nine years, and both parties had severely suffered. Neither of the belligerent powers could expect to gain much by continuing hostilities against the other; but France had less to gain than England, whose naval ascendancy it was in vain for her to attempt to destroy. Her own navy was crushed:

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that of her fatigued and reluctant allies was scarcely if at all in a better state; and the hope which had looked to the northern powers for maritime aid, was blasted by the thunder of Nelson at Copenhagen. It was, for several reasons, of importance to the First Consul to gain a breathing time, and to recover by peace those colonies which there was hardly a possibility of wresting by war from the grasp of his potent adversary. On the other hand, the British ministers, newly come into office, having little natural hold of the country, and, therefore, willing to gain popularity with the multitude, were not averse from bringing the conflict to a close. The result of this feeling on both sides was the peace of Amiens. Many persons hailed this peace with unfeigned delight, and flattered themselves that the restored friendship of the two countries would be of long duration; but other and sharper-sighted politicians derided those pacific dreams, and predicted that, at no distant period, England would be compelled to resume the sword, and, under less favourable circumstances than the present, to contend for her very existence, with a more inveterate, artful, and formidable foe than had yet been opposed to her.

If we look to the result of this war, we shall be obliged to confess that it was not such as could afford any gratification to British feelings. The first object of the contest, namely, the put-

ing down of the republican government, was never vigorously and wisely pursued, and was early abandoned. The second declared object, that of indemnity for the past and security for the future, can scarcely, by any perversion of language, be said to have been attained. On the European continent, the power of France was immensely aggrandized; in her colonies she lost nothing. Nay, she was, in fact, exceedingly benefited by their temporary submission to her enemy; as that enemy restored them fructified by an abundant portion of British capital. The gains of England were Ceylon in the east, and Trinidad in the west; acquisitions which afforded fertile themes of sarcasm and bitter scorn to those who disapproved of the peace of Amiens, and which were certainly by no means commensurate with her exertions and sacrifices, and were still less adequate to secure her in future from a repetition of the dangers which had threatened her in the past.

Yet, as far as relates to the West Indies, had success depended only on a lavish, and it may be said a careless, expenditure of blood and treasure, it could not have failed to crown the British efforts. Not less, but probably rather more, than thirty thousand soldiers were victims of pestilence and the sword; more than as many millions of money were spent in the protracted struggle. It would be easy to demonstrate that an army of

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such magnitude, skilfully commanded, and timely employed in Europe, might, at various epochs of the war, have accomplished the ruin of the republican government. But the fractions which might have composed it were, on the contrary, destined to moulder away uselessly and ingloriously, in a contest with an unworthy foe, or a prey to the ravages of disease. St. Domingo, in particular, was a devouring and unfathomable gulph for the swallowing up of money and of lives.

The master error of those who conducted the war seems to have been their practice of never rousing themselves to an exertion which should, at the very outset, overbear all resistance on the part of the enemy, and should subsequently ensure obedience, by rendering rebellion hopeless. Had the force originally confided to Sir Charles Grey been sufficient to sweep the republicans from the French islands, we might have retained a firm hold of our conquests, infinite bloodshed would have been spared, and Grenada and St. Vincent's would not have been exposed to be desolated by a licentious banditti. The same may be said with respect to the armament which was placed under the command of Sir Ralph Abercromby. But, instead of making war on a great scale, those who had the management of affairs, and who, it must be remembered, had almost unlimited means, chose to confine themselves to

an unmeaning succession of petty efforts. Instead of setting on foot a formidable army, which might at once strike a decisive blow, they preferred to have an army originally too weak for its purpose, which hourly diminished in strength, and of which the thinned and dispirited ranks were hardly filled up by the scanty reinforcements from the mother country. They recruited for the hospital and the grave; not for the breach and the field of battle. Such a mode of warfare is, of all others, the best calculated to exhaust the military resources of a state, and to degrade its military character. Boldness, promptitude, and energy, are among the foremost of the qualities which should be possessed by men who are desirous to bring a contest to a glorious conclusion. These were undoubtedly wanting in the ministers who had the direction of the West-Indian war; and it is, therefore, not wonderful that the effect produced fell so lamentably short of what might reasonably have been expected, from the means which were employed.

CHAPTER VIII.

Rupture of the peace of Amiens.—War recommenced in the West Indies.—Landing effected at St. Lucia.—Morne Fortune taken by storm.—Surrender of the island of Tobago.—Reduction of Demerara, Essequibo and Berbice.—Expedition against Antigua defeated.—Proceedings of the squadron off St. Domingo.—Surrender of Rochambeau.—Conquest of Surinam.—A French squadron arrives in the West Indies.—Contributions levied by it upon Dominica and other islands.—A second squadron, under Admiral Villeneuve, arrives at Martinico.—Surrender of the Diamond Rock.—Campaign of 1806 entirely naval.—Capture of a French squadron by Admiral Duckworth.—The French fleet, under Guillaumez, arrives at Martinico.—Capture of the Pomona, off the coast of Cuba.—Curaçoa taken by Captain Brisbane.

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THE peace, or rather hollow truce, of Amiens was but of short duration. The continued encroachments of the French ruler, his contemptuous insolence, and his obvious designs against the safety of this country, rendered it impossible any

longer to remain at amity with a power which it was less dangerous to encounter as an enemy than to receive as a friend. In little more than eighteen months the sword was once more drawn, and a contest was commenced, which, as had been predicted, was to be carried on with far greater violence than any former one had been, and was not to be terminated till after a long and weary struggle, and the final ruin of one of the contending parties.

The West Indies were, of course, again a theatre for warlike operations. It was fortunate for Great Britain, that the First Consul had bent all his military efforts to the recovery of St. Domingo, so as to leave his other islands in a comparatively unguarded state, and that the powerful army which Le Clerc had landed in that colony was reduced to a most deplorable situation, by the pertinacious hostility of its negro opponents, and the malignity of the climate. Had St. Domingo been easily reduced to subjection, the French troops would, at this moment, have been ready to pour down upon the British possessions; and, however favourable to us the result of the conflict might have been, there can be no doubt that our colonies would have severely suffered. As it was, the French, at the breaking out of the war, were in no condition to form any schemes of conquest or invasion; and the British had, in consequence, full opportunity to act vigorously against them.

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St. Lucia was the first object against which our arms were directed. The troops were embarked at Barbadoes, on the nineteenth of June, and on the twenty-first they were disembarked in Choc Bay. At half past five in the afternoon, the French outposts were driven in, and the town of Castries was taken. The governor, General Nogues, retired with the whole of his force to the strong post of Morne Fortune. As he refused to accede to any terms, and as the approaching rains, on which the French commander doubtless relied, would make it almost impracticable to carry on a siege, General Grinfield, notwithstanding the difficulty of the enterprise, resolved to attempt an immediate assault. The storming took place at four o'clock in the morning. For some time the garrison made a gallant stand; but the spirit of the assailants at length overcame every obstacle. In half an hour all the works were carried at the point of the bayonet. It reflects high honour on the conquerors, that, from the moment when they had effected their entrance into the fortress, their animosity was at an end, and not a single individual of their late enemies was either killed or wounded. The total loss, in slain and hurt, on our side was between one hundred and thirty and one hundred and forty men. That of the French was considerable; and the number of the prisoners was six hundred and forty. This blow was decisive of the fate

of the colony; Pigeon Island and all the other posts being delivered up without a further struggle.

From St. Lucia, after a stay of only three days, General Grinfield proceeded to Tobago, which he reached on the thirtieth of June. In this island he was sure to meet with no open or secret resistance from the colonists, nearly all of them English, and who had reluctantly returned under the dominion of France, in consequence of the treaty of Amiens. The forces were landed and marched to Scarborough, without any opposition being attempted on the part of the enemy, except from a single battery, quickly silenced, at the moment of disembarkation. The governor, General Cæsar Berthier, was, in truth, too weak to endeavour to resist the progress of the British. On the first summons he consented to capitulate, and his feeble garrison, consisting of somewhat more than two hundred soldiers and sailors, laid down their arms, on condition of being allowed to return to France.

The colonies of Demerara, Essequibo and Berbice, were the next hostile possessions which submitted to our authority. It would be a perversion of language to term them conquests, as they willingly placed themselves under British protection. During the interval between their surrender in 1796 and the peace of Amiens, many English subjects had settled in them, and

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the Dutch colonists themselves were, in general, not unfriendly to their new rulers. This alone, even without the dread of the destruction inevitably arising from our enmity, should they be rash enough to provoke it, would have been sufficient to make the people of Demerara reluctant to oppose us. But at this moment they had a strong reason for looking to us as deliverers, rather than as enemies. The notorious Victor Hugues was now governor of Cayenne, and the spirit of mischief was as much alive in him as ever. He had collected around him a formidable band of desperadoes, with which it was his avowed intention, first to seize upon Dutch Guiana, and then to proceed to revolutionize the British West-India colonies. Such a threat as this, from such a man, was not a little calculated to excite alarm in his Batavian neighbours. Certain that the colonial force was not strong enough to prevent the execution of the introductory part of his project, a portion of the colonists dispatched a messenger to Barbadoes, to apply for succour. A flag of truce was immediately sent from that island, with an Essequibo proprietor on board, and through his medium the ulterior mode of proceeding is believed to have been settled. The Netley was also stationed off the coast, to procure information, and collect boats to convey the troops on shore.

This having been done, a division, under

General Grinfield, sailed from Barbadoes on the last day of August, and arrived off the river of Demerara on the eighteenth of the following month. A summons was sent in, which, of course, produced an immediate surrender. Demerara and Essequibo were, in consequence, taken possession of by the British, on the same day; and Colonel Nicholson was then detached to Berbice, which was yielded up to him on the twenty-fourth. Had the colonists not considered the seeming invaders as friends, it is obvious that they might have made the reduction of these colonies an arduous task; as their force was not short of one thousand seven hundred men, and the shallowness of the water, for some distance from the land, would have rendered the disembarkation of the troops a difficult and dangerous undertaking in the face of a resolute enemy.

While this expedition was on its way to Demerara, the governor of Guadaloupe formed a scheme, which, had it been successful, would have done considerable damage, and been productive of much inconvenience to our navy. His design was to destroy the port and dock-yard of English Harbour, in Antigua. For this purpose he embarked seven hundred men, in thirteen schooners. Fortunately, however, they had not time to complete their short passage. They were fallen in with, on the fifth of September, by the Emerald frigate, which captured three of them,

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and drove the rest of them back to Guadaloupe, under the batteries of which they with difficulty escaped.

St. Domingo, which was now the grave of a French army, as it had formerly been of a British, proved also in no small degree injurious to the navy of France. At the latter end of June a British squadron appeared off that island, and was exceedingly active in harassing the enemy, and intercepting succours. The Mignonne corvette, of eighteen guns, was cut out of Cape Nicholas Mole, on the twenty-ninth of June, by the boats of the Goliath; on the first of July, La Creole frigate, of forty-four guns, with General Morgan, his staff, and five hundred and thirty French troops, was captured off the same place, by Commodore Bayntun, who likewise took a schooner, on the same day, with a hundred blood-hounds from Cuba; and, on the eleventh, Captain Bissel, in the Racoon sloop, made himself master of the Lodi of twenty guns, after an action of forty minutes. Numerous small armed vessels also fell into the hands of the British cruizers. Cape François was now closely invested on all sides, and, as there was every probability that it must eventually fall, the Du Quesne of seventy-four guns, and the Dugay Trouin, of the same force, made an effort, on the twenty-fourth of July, to quit the harbour, and elude the vigilance of our fleet. In this they were but partly suc-

cessful. They were pursued by the Vanguard and the Elephant. After a chase of twenty-four hours, the Du Quesne struck her colours to the Vanguard, and was carried into Jamaica. The Dugay Trouin was fortunate enough to escape from her pursuers.

Closely pressed by their negro opponents, who were justly incensed at the cruelties of which their enemies had been guilty, the situation of the French in the various towns on the coast soon became exceedingly critical, and their fears proportionably excited. They had, indeed, little to hope, and much to dread, from men whose passions were seldom under strict controul, and who had been irritated beyond human endurance. In this emergency it appeared to be wiser to throw themselves on the mercy of a civilized foe, than to run the risk of falling into the power of those from whom mercy was scarcely to be expected. General d'Henin, the governor of St. Marc, was the first who acted on this principle. His safety and that of his troops had, however, been already secured by British kindness. Having been informed by General Dessalines that he meant immediately to summon the town, which was reduced to the most pitiable extremity, Admiral Sir J. Duckworth had stipulated with him, that, in case of the surrender of the French, they should be spared, and marched to the Mole, to be put into his hands. But General

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d'Henin did not wait for the summons of the negro chief. The Vanguard having, on the second of September, been sent round to St. Marc, he dispatched a flag of truce on board, with an offer to capitulate, which was accepted by Captain Walker. A corvette of twelve guns, and two brigs, were delivered up to the captain. The garrison amounted to eight hundred and fifty men, who were in the most deplorable state, they having for a long while been suffering under an almost total privation of food.

This example was followed, in the course of a week, by the commander at Fort Dauphin; not, however, till the cannon of the Theseus had rendered his situation entirely hopeless. Captain Bligh, of that ship, finding that the small coasting craft of the enemy sheltered themselves under the batteries of Fort Dauphin, where a frigate was also lying at anchor, resolved to make himself master of at least the frigate. With this purpose he placed his vessel within musket-shot of Fort Labouque, at the entrance of the harbour, the fire of which he speedily silenced. The frigate then hauled down her colours; and the commander of the town, now deprived of the means of resisting the blacks, also surrendered with his troops, and was conveyed to Cape François. Learning that General Dumont and his suite had lately been taken by the blacks, and were in imminent peril, Captain Bligh humanely

solicited Dessalines for their release, and was gratified by obtaining it. Towards the end of the month, General Brunette, who commanded at Aux Cayes, was added to the number of those who sought the protection of the British, to avert the danger which they dreaded from the resentment of the negroes.

Cape François, where General Rochambeau commanded, held out more than two months longer. At length necessity compelled the French general to open a negociation with the besiegers. On the 19th of November, Dessalines, probably anxious to complete the conquest of the island, consented that the garrison should retire, within ten days, in their own ships, and should leave their sick in the hospitals, who, on their recovery, should be sent to France in neutral vessels. With a shameless want of good faith, of which too many of his countrymen have given examples, Rochambeau, at the very moment when he was signing this capitulation, commissioned two officers to treat on the same subject with the British admiral. Not a word was hinted of the agreement into which he had entered with Dessalines. His terms were rejected, and others proposed to him, of which he refused to accept. He most probably indulged a hope that the stormy weather, which then prevailed, would blow the blockading squadron off the coast, and thus afford him a chance of flight. In this he was

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disappointed. The port was watched with a persevering vigilance which precluded the possibility of escape. He was now placed, by his own duplicity, in an awkward dilemma. Without, was the blockading squadron, ready to rush upon him the instant that he moved; within, were the blacks, who threatened to sink and destroy the ships and troops with red-hot shot, if he delayed his departure from the harbour. In this emergency he was glad to implore the British admiral to obtain him a short respite from the blacks, till some sort of capitulation could be drawn up. This was done, though not without difficulty, as Dessalines could hardly be dissuaded from carrying his threat into execution. The result was, that three frigates and seventeen smaller vessels hauled down their colours, and the remains of the garrison, consisting of about eight thousand men, all that were left of a hundred thousand men, became prisoners of war.

The Mole was still held by a small force, under General Noailles. When summoned, on the second of December, by Captain Loring, he declined to comply; asserting at the same time that he had five months provisions. But on that very night he silently evacuated the post, and put his garrison on board of six vessels. The brig in which he was embarked had the good fortune to escape; the whole of the remainder were captured by the British. Thus terminated

the French expedition for the re-conquest of St. Domingo. CHAP. VIII.

Surinam was the sole object against which, in the year 1804, the British arms were directed; and it did not fall quite so easily as its sister colony of Demerara had done. Paramaribo, the capital of this colony, is situated on the Surinam river, some distance above its junction with the Commewyne. The town itself is unfortified, but several strong works guard and make difficult the approach to it. On the right bank of the Surinam, near its entrance into the sea, is the battery of Braam's point, mounting seven guns; higher up is the battery Fredirici, of twelve heavy guns; and at a small distance beyond, is Fort Leyden, of twelve guns. At the confluence of the Surinam and the Commewyne, and crossing its fire with that of Fort Leyden, is Fort Amsterdam, on which are mounted upwards of eighty pieces of ordnance. On the left bank of the Surinam, and nearly opposite to Fort Amsterdam, is Fort Purmerind, which contains twelve guns, and is protected on its rear and flanks by almost impracticable morasses and woods. Still further up the stream, and close to the town, which, however, it does not defend to the landward, is Fort Zealandia, in which are ten guns. The natural obstacles are equally formidable. From the shallowness of the water off the coast, and in the Surinam, a landing can be effected 1804.

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only at the top of the tide, and on certain points; and, from the marshy and woody nature of the interior, it can be traversed only by means of the rivers and creeks by which it is intersected. In aid of all this, the Dutch commodore, Bloys Van Treslong, had skilfully availed himself of his naval resources. The Proserpine of thirty-two guns, the Pylades corvette of eighteen guns, and three merchantmen, carrying each from eight to twelve guns, were formed in line, between Forts Purmerind and Amsterdam; a schooner of ten guns covered the shore at Voorburg; and seven gun-boats were employed as circumstances required. The whole of the naval and military force exceeded two thousand men.

The British forces intended for the reduction of the colony scarcely amounted to an equal number. After a voyage of twenty days from Barbadoes, they arrived off the mouth of the Surinam river on the 25th of April. As there was no probability of opening a direct way up the river, the general, Sir Charles Green, resolved to turn the positions of the enemy. For this purpose Brigadier-general Maitland was dispatched, with about seven hundred men, to effect a landing at Warrapa creek, which lies about ten leagues to the eastward of the Surinam. The Commewyne, for more than this distance before its junction with the Surinam, runs in a parallel line with the sea, so as to form a sort of penin-

stila. By landing at Warrapa creek, therefore, and marching across the isthmus, the troops would become masters of the course of the Commewyne, and might obtain a sufficient number of plantation boats, to convey them to the rear of Fort Amsterdam. This movement would also cut off a considerable detachment, which was posted at Fort Brandwacht, on the Mud creek. At the same time three ships were ordered to attack the battery on Braam's point, in order to enable the squadron to proceed up the Surinam as far as possible. Both these services were completely effected. The division under Brigadier-general Maitland made good its landing in the one quarter; and, in the other, the Dutch battery was silenced and taken possession of, after a few broadsides from the ships. A summons was then sent to the governor, but he refused to listen to any proposition for a surrender.

The ships now moved up the river, as close as was practicable to Forts Leyden and Fredirici, which was accomplished by dint of much exertion, the Emerald sometimes forcing her way through three feet of mud. An attack on Fort Purmerind was meditated, but the state of the tides would not allow of its being carried into effect. On the twenty-ninth the country below Forts Leyden and Fredirici was reconnoitred, and it was discovered that a way might be opened

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through the woods, to attack those works in the rear. This the general resolved to do without delay. Accordingly, between ten and eleven at night, a hundred and forty men of the sixty-fourth regiment, led by the Hon. Colonel Cranstoun, thirty artificers and workmen with felling axes, and thirty seamen, commanded by Captains Maxwell, Ferris, and Richardson, the whole under the orders of Brigadier-general Hughes, assisted by Lieutenant-colonel Shipley, were landed at Resolution plantation, whence they proceeded through the woods with their negro guides. Through the quantity of rain, which had recently fallen, the naturally difficult path was become nearly impassible. The troops, nevertheless, persevered, and, after five hours toilsome march, they arrived in the rear of the Fredirici battery. They had not been able to approach undiscovered. The enemy were prepared for their reception, and opened upon them a heavy fire of musketry and grape. In spite of this, the assailants pushed forward with fixed bayonets, entered the work, and compelled its defenders to take shelter in Fort Leyden. As the Dutch retired they set fire to their powder magazine, by the explosion of which a few British officers and men were severely wounded. Not a moment, however, was lost by the assailants, in completing the service on which they were engaged. The only road to Fort Leyden was by a

narrow causeway, of seven hundred yards in length, enfiladed by five pieces of cannon. Along this causeway, and under the fire of the artillery, they pressed on till they reached the fort, which they immediately assaulted with the bayonet. Panic-struck by their intrepidity, the garrison now called out for quarter; and, irritated as the troops were by the late explosion, they extended mercy to their enemies, who laid down their arms, to the number of a hundred and twenty men; about thirty more having previously made their escape to the opposite bank of the river.

This success removed the chief obstacles to the further progress of the invaders. It opened the communication with Brigadier-general Maitland, who had by this time reached the upper part of the Commewyne, it secured a position from which an effectual fire could be opened upon Fort Amsterdam, and it gave the command of the finest portion of the colony, which abounded with resources of every kind. All the troops were now disembarked at Fort Leyden, and marched, by the north bank of the Commewyne, to nearly opposite Zooland's plantation, where it was intended to cross the river, and form a junction with the division of General Maitland. The stores, provisions and ammunition, were also conveyed into the Commewyne, in which river a naval force was established. The enemy in Fort Amsterdam endeavoured to

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obstruct these labours, by a cannonade, but they were speedily silenced by the throwing of a few shells.

On the third of May, General Maitland effected a landing on the south side of the Commewyne, and approached within a mile of Fort Amsterdam, extending his left towards the Surinam, to invest the fortress completely on the side of the land. The remainder of the army prepared to follow. The governor, Lieutenant-colonel Batenburgh, did not, however, deem it prudent to hazard a protracted resistance. Finding that the invaders were firmly established, he proposed articles of capitulation, which, with some trifling modifications, were finally agreed to by the British military and naval commanders. The garrison was allowed to return to Holland, and to serve the Batavian government, on condition of not bearing arms against Great Britain and her allies. To the inhabitants of the colony the terms were as advantageous as could be desired; and they did not dissemble the pleasure which they felt, that the result of the contest had placed them once more under British protection.

The great body of the French navy had hitherto remained in a nearly quiescent state. The active ruler of France, however, far from neglecting it, had omitted nothing which could increase its numbers and efficiency, and at length enable it to carry into effect his darling scheme

of wresting the trident from the grasp of England. Ships still incessantly occupied his thoughts, whatever might be his ideas with respect to colonies and commerce. It is probable, indeed, that the final attainment of the latter was of far less consideration in his mind, than the prospect of humiliating, perhaps destroying, a powerful and dangerous rival, and reigning on the sea with the same despotic authority which he exercised on the land. An event now occurred, by which a considerable addition was made to his naval resources. This was the war which broke out, at the close of 1804, between England and Spain. As the British fleets would henceforth be scattered over a wider space, and, therefore, be less capable of co-operating, would probably sometimes be of inferior strength to what they had been, and would have their attention distracted by a variety of objects, it seemed to him that the time was come to release the French squadrons from their disgraceful state of durance, and at least to harass and alarm the British possessions, even were it found to be impossible to accomplish any thing of greater importance. In the eyes of the people every petty success would, as he well knew, be magnified into a splendid triumph; and against a power whose dominions were so widely extended some petty successes it would not be difficult to obtain. The price at which they would be bought, does not seem to have entered

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at all into the calculations which he made, or was undoubtedly estimated at too low a rate.

It was at the commencement of 1805 that Napoleon began to act upon his newly-adopted system of naval aggression. His first effort consisted in sending to the West Indies, under Admiral Missiessy, a squadron of five sail of the line, three frigates, two brigs and some other vessels, with four thousand troops on board. Missiessy was fortunate enough to elude the British fleets, and to arrive, on the twentieth of February, at Martinico, where he landed a large quantity of muskets and ammunition. After a stay there of only twenty-four hours, he sailed for Dominica, and appeared off Roseau, in that island, on the morning of the twenty-second. At first, as he hoisted British colours, he was mistaken for a friend, and an officer was sent to conduct his ships into the port. The mistake was, however, soon perceived by Brigadier-general Prevost, who commanded at Dominica, and who instantly made preparations to oppose the landing of the enemy. His regular force did not exceed two hundred men; the remainder consisted of the colonial militia. Scanty as his means of defence were, he, nevertheless, resolved that the colony should not fall into the power of the invaders without an obstinate struggle.

The French commenced their operations by an attempt to land two thousand men on the left

flank of General Prevost, which was posted between Roseau and Cachecrou. The first boats were beaten off, but a schooner and a brig coming up to cover them, they succeeded in reaching the shore, and the British fell back a short distance, to occupy a defile, which leads to the town. General Prevost having strengthened this point, the defence of which was entrusted to Major Nunn, the French column sustained a heavy loss, and was unable to gain a single inch of ground. Major Nunn having been dangerously wounded, the command devolved to Captain O'Connel, who also received a wound at the moment of assuming it; but who, nevertheless, exerted himself so gallantly that, after beating back the enemy in several charges, he at length compelled them to withdraw from their advanced position. During this time, the French squadron was pouring a tremendous fire into the town, which was in flames in several places.

Foiled on the left, the invaders landed a formidable column on the right, near Morne Daniel. On this flank General Prevost had not more than a hundred men of the St. George's militia. This small body marched with great resolution to prevent the disembarkation; but it received so destructive a fire from the frigates, which had stood close in shore, that it was broken, and under the necessity of falling hastily back to the heights of Woodbridge estate. Hav-

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ing thus obtained a footing, the French advanced to Morne Daniel, and assaulted the redoubt, which they carried after an obstinate resistance from the slender detachment that defended it. In the mean while Captain O'Donnel had gained ground on the left, notwithstanding the enemy had been reinforced from the ships. It was, however, probable that he would at last be overpowered, as a large column of the French was climbing the mountains to fall on his rear; and, besides, the right flank being forced, the position was no longer tenable. General Prevost, therefore, determined to retire to Prince Rupert's, and to hold out there to the last extremity.

Having given the president permission to capitulate for Roseau, written to General Lagrange, the French commander, to desire that private property might be respected, dismissed such of the militia as were not calculated for hard service, and ordered Captain O'Donnel to make a forced march with the remains of the forty-sixth and the first West-India regiments, General Prevost, accompanied only by two officers, crossed the country, and by the assistance of the inhabitants, and the exertions of the Charaibes, reached Prince Rupert's within twenty-four hours from his quitting Roseau. He was speedily joined by Captain O'Connel with the troops. During a continued march of four days, through an exceedingly difficult country, that brave officer did

not leave behind even one of his wounded men. Preparations were immediately made to sustain a siege. Much had already been done by Lieutenant-colonel Broughton, to put the post in a defensible state.

General Lagrange now dispatched a summons to the British commander. The language of it, unstained by brutality or gasconade, was honourable to him, both as a soldier and as a man. The answer returned to it was, of course, in the negative; but General Prevost embraced this opportunity to express his gratitude to his humane enemy, for the kindness which had been shewn by him to his wife and family. The French general seems, in truth, to have been a far more respectable character than many of the men who were at the head of armies in the service of France.

As plunder not conquest was the chief object of this expedition, and as any delay might expose the fleet to the serious danger of coming into contact with a British squadron, the French leaders did not deem it prudent to undertake a siege, which they could neither pursue with safety, nor abandon with credit. Having levied a contribution upon Roseau, they reimbarked their troops, and, after hovering for a day or two in the vicinity of the island, they took their departure.

From Dominica they bent their course to

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St. Christopher's. The force stationed there not being sufficient to defend the whole of the posts, Major Forster abandoned the town, and retired to the strong fort and position of Brimstone Hill. The enemy landed five hundred men, on the fifth of March, and took possession of the town. They threatened to attack Brimstone Hill, but the threat was, of course, a mere bravado. They who had not ventured to try their strength upon Prince Rupert's, were not likely to assail a far more defensible post. It was an easier task to extort money from the fears of the unarmed colonists; and, therefore, they demanded the sum of forty thousand pounds; menacing to burn the town, if the demand were not complied with. With much difficulty the inhabitants raised eighteen thousand, with which the French returned on board the fleet. The invaders concluded their work at St. Christopher's by towing out, from the anchorage at Basse Terre, six vessels, some of them very valuable, which, after having pillaged them, they set on fire, and allowed to drift to sea. Nevis and Montserrat were also visited by these freebooters, contributions were levied on them, and ships destroyed. This done, the fleet made the best of its way to Martinico, which it reached on the 14th of March.

They had still the hardest part of their task to perform. This was to return to France, with the plunder which they had made in their buc-

caneering expedition. There can, indeed, be little doubt that the risk to which they were exposed was great, and that their fears were at least commensurate with the danger. For a while it seemed as if those fears were on the point of being realized; as Admiral Cochrane, who had been detached with six sail of the line, to watch the motions of the enemy, was at one period not far distant from them. Their good fortune, however, did not desert them, and they had at length the satisfaction of reaching France, without having been interrupted by any of the squadrons which were cruizing to intercept them.

The sending forth of this squadron by the French emperor was only the prelude to another naval effort, of superior magnitude, from which the most important consequences were no doubt expected to result. This expectation was, in truth, not an irrational one; for both the naval and military force employed was more powerful than had, for a long while, been seen in the West Indies; and in that quarter there was not, at the moment, any British squadron of sufficient strength to oppose its progress. What was achieved by this formidable armament now remains to be shewn.

With eleven sail of the line, six frigates, and two corvettes, the French admiral, Villeneuve, quitted Toulon, on the 30th of March, having on board ten thousand picked troops, under General

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Lauriston. He touched at Carthagena, with the intention of joining Admiral Salcedo, who lay there with six sail of the line; but, being informed that these vessels were destined for another service, he proceeded to Cadiz, where Admiral Gravina was lying in readiness with eight sail of the line, and five frigates, having on board 2280 soldiers. He arrived off Cadiz on the ninth of April. Sir John Orde was then blockading the harbour, but his fleet being inferior to the enemy, he would not venture to bring them to action; and, as they had other objects in view, they were by no means anxious for a combat. On the same evening, Villeneuve effected his junction with Gravina, and with L'Aigle French line of battle ship, which had long been shut up in the harbour of Cadiz. By the next morning, the whole of the combined squadron was fairly on its way across the Atlantic, with a favourable wind.

The wide extent of ocean which lay between them and the West Indies was traversed unopposed by the two admirals. On the ninth of May, Gravina, who had a separate service to perform, parted for awhile from Villeneuve. It is not positively known what was the service with which he was entrusted, but it is generally supposed to have been the re-conquest of Trinidad. Whatever it was, it remained unaccomplished, and even unattempted. Villeneuve continued

his course to Martinico, and entered the harbour of Fort Royal on the 14th of May. Two of his frigates, which he had sent before him, captured the Cayenne English frigate of twenty-four guns. CHAP. VIII. 1805.

The arrival of this powerful force spread alarm through all the islands, as the British fleet under Admirals Cochrane and Dacres did not exceed nine sail of the line. Martial law was immediately proclaimed in the colonies, and preparations were hastily made to repel invasion. The French, on their side, were employed in collecting transports at Guadaloupe and Martinico, and taking such other steps as were necessary, previously to their commencing their attacks. Antigua was said to be the colony against which their arms were to be first directed.

But, while the French were thus occupied, an adversary was approaching, the terror of whose very name was sufficient to palsy their courage, and save our islands from the devastation with which they were menaced. At the time when Villeneuve escaped from Toulon, Lord Nelson was cruizing off Sardinia, and it was not till late in April that he received certain intelligence of the course which the French admiral had taken. He instantly concluded that the West Indies was the enemy's object; and, with his wonted activity, he lost not a moment in commencing the pursuit. He reached the Straits of Gibraltar on the second of May, and put into Tetuan and Lagos

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bays for water and other necessaries; and having obtained these, and a welcome supply of stores from some transports which had run into the latter harbour for safety, he steered for the West Indies, to which he had now received positive information that the enemy were gone. Every inch of canvas that could possibly be carried, he ordered to be set to accelerate his progress, and, though his squadron was little more than half as strong as the combined fleet, it was his declared intention to attack the latter whenever he could find it.

It was on the fourth of June that Lord Nelson reached Barbadoes, after a voyage of twenty-four days. Here he was informed that Villeneuve had sailed to the southward, with the intention of making an attempt upon Trinidad. Taking in two thousand troops, under Sir William Myers, and having been joined by Admiral Cochrane with two sail of the line, he hastened to Trinidad, but, on his arrival there, he had the mortification to find that he had been misled by erroneous intelligence. He then retraced his steps, determining to visit the whole series of the islands. At Grenada he was told that the enemy had been seen making sail to the north. Lord Nelson, therefore, continued his course to Antigua, where he was apprized of their having appeared off that island, and was assured that they had subsequently steered in a northern direction. He was

now convinced of what he had before suspected, that they were on their return; and, consequently, after having relanded the troops, he once more bent his way towards Europe.

The combined fleets had been three weeks in the West Indies before the arrival of the British admiral. Gravina had rejoined Villeneuve, and the two admirals were masters of the seas. For their inaction during all that time it would not be easy to discover a plausible reason. That, however, they remained without making a single hostile movement against any one of our colonies, is a fact no less certain than incomprehensible. That the news of Lord Nelson being at hand should inspire them with terror, is a circumstance not so difficult to be comprehended. It appears, in reality, that as soon as they heard of his approach they thought of nothing but of flight. On the sixth of June they took their departure homeward from Fort Royal harbour. From an armament by which their subjugation had, in the first moments of gloom, been considered as inevitable, no loss whatever would have been sustained by the British colonies, had not the Antigua fleet, consisting of fifteen merchantmen, unfortunately sailed under convoy of the Netley, only the evening before the combined fleets made their appearance off St. John's harbour. In less than forty-eight hours they were overtaken and captured; but the enemy, on a false alarm that

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Lord Nelson was coming up, was under the necessity of destroying them. Villeneuve and Gravina then continued their flight to Europe, pursued by Lord Nelson, from whom, however, they had, for the present, the good fortune to escape.

But, independently of this capture, it cannot be said that the French and Spanish admirals returned to Europe without having made any conquest. One they certainly did achieve, and the praise due to it ought not to be withheld from them. With twenty sail of the line and twelve thousand troops, they restored to the dominion of France the Diamond Rock. This barren and rugged islet, which is six hundred feet high, and not quite a mile in circumference, lies on the south side of Martinico, within three quarters of a mile of the shore, between Fort Royal bay and Cul de Sac Marin. It is precipitous on three sides, the west side alone being accessible. This rock, which had never been visited before except by sea-crabs and birds, was occupied and fortified by Sir Samuel Hood at the close of the year 1803. It was now held by a handful of men, under that Captain Maurice who, some years after, so gallantly defended against the Danes the small island of Anholt. There is something curious, if not ludicrous, in the circumstance that this spot was rated on the king's books as a sloop of war, and that the garrison was

always spoken of under the denomination of her crew.

On the 16th of May the French commenced the blockade with a crowd of frigates and small vessels, and they kept it up so closely as effectually to prevent any supplies from being introduced. On the morning of the thirty-first, two line of battle ships, a frigate and a schooner, with eleven gun-boats, and fifteen hundred troops, appeared before the rock. Aware that it would be impossible to defend the lower works against such a force, and that if he remained in them too long his retreat might be cut off, Captain Maurice retired with his men to the upper works. The enemy, of course, succeeded in landing his troops, but not without having suffered severely from the fire of the batteries. An incessant cannonade and bombardment was kept up from the squadron, and a fire of musketry from the French soldiers, till the evening of the second of June. The besiegers sustained a heavy loss from the batteries and from the stones which were rolled down upon them from the summit of the rock. Their exertions would, in all probability, have been fruitless, had not Captain Maurice's stock of ammunition and water been unfortunately exhausted. This alone induced him to enter into a capitulation, by which it was agreed that his men should be allowed to march out with colours flying, and should be conveyed to Barbadoes, on

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condition of not serving again till they had been regularly exchanged.

In those actions which occurred, during this year, between single ships, the French had no reason to boast of their superior bravery or success. The first action of the kind which took place, though it terminated to the disadvantage of the British, was honourable to their spirit. It was fought, on the 16th of February, between the Cleopatra of thirty-two guns, Captain Sir R. Lawrie, and the Ville de Milan of forty-six guns, originally built for a seventy-four, one of a squadron of six frigates, which was dispatched with troops to Martinico, in August 1804. Having dispatches on board, and orders not to speak to any thing on the passage, the captain of the Ville de Milan, M. Reynaud, at first declined the combat, and made every effort to escape. The perseverance of Sir R. Lawrie, however, finally compelled him to come to an engagement. For two hours and a half the contest was continued with vigour, and the Cleopatra had the best of the battle; but at length, while the British captain was endeavouring to cross the enemy's bow, in order to rake him, a shot broke the wheel, the shattered spokes of which were jammed in so as to render the rudder immoveable. The French captain availed himself of this circumstance, to take up a position, whence he could pour in a destructive fire, which it was impossible to return. One

attempt which he made to board was foiled, but the second succeeded, and Sir R. Lawrie was under the necessity of striking his colours to his fortunate opponent. M. Reynaud, however, did not live to enjoy his triumph; he was slain by the last shot which was fired from the Cleopatra.

The French did not long retain their prize. On the twenty-third, the Ville de Milan and the Cleopatra fell in with the Leander, Captain Talbot, who came up with them, after a four hour's chace. At first, the French captains seemed disposed to resist; but they speedily discovered that resistance would be fruitless. The Cleopatra hauled down the hostile flag, and hove to; the Ville de Milan endeavoured to escape. In an hour's time, however, the Leander was again alongside of her, and she then submitted without firing a shot.

The only naval action which remains to be noticed is that between the Blanche frigate, commanded by Captain Zachary Mudge, and a French squadron, consisting of La Topaze of forty-four guns, La Department des Landes of eighteen guns, La Torche of eighteen guns, and La Faune of sixteen guns. Captain Mudge fell in with this squadron on the 19th of July, six days after its departure from Martinico. As the Blanche was a heavy sailer, having had little or no copper on for nine months, her gallant captain

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had no resource but to make the enemy purchase her at as dear a rate as possible. The action commenced about eleven in the morning. In less than an hour the Blanche became wholly ungovernable, and was reduced to a perfect wreck, her sails were destroyed, her masts tottering, seven of her guns dismounted, and her crew reduced to only a hundred and ninety men. The colours were, therefore, reluctantly hauled down, after a contest of an hour and a half. The victors did not carry their trophy into port. In the afternoon, the Blanche was found to be in a sinking state, upon which she was set on fire, and in a little while she went to the bottom, her magazine having for some time been under water.

An exploit which was performed by a small party of sailors, belonging to the Bacchante, Captain Dashwood, led by Lieutenant Oliver, deserves to be recorded for its daring intrepidity. Three French privateers, or rather pirates, since they attacked foes and neutrals indiscriminately, having found a place of refuge in the little port of Mariel, a short distance to the westward of the Havannah, Captain Dashwood determined to expel or destroy them. Two boats were accordingly dispatched, on the evening of the fifth of April, under Lieutenants Oliver and Campbell. Before the harbour could be entered, it was necessary to gain possession of a round tower, forty feet

high, pierced all round with loop holes for musketry, and having three long twenty-four pounders on its summit. It was held by a captain and thirty soldiers. Lieutenant Oliver, in the headmost boat, finding that his approach was discovered, pushed on alone, landed in the face of a dreadful fire, and, without waiting to return a shot, he scaled the fort with only thirteen men, by means of a ladder which he had previously provided, and compelled the Spaniards to surrender. Unfortunately, the privateers had sailed the day before; and thus the main object of the enterprise was frustrated. Two schooners, laden with sugar, were, however, brought out of the port, in spite of the resistance of the troops and militia, who swarmed into the place from the surrounding country.

The advantage of this campaign, as far as regards the west, must be acknowledged to have been clearly on the side of France. Her fleets had twice traversed the ocean in safety, had levied contributions, harassed our commerce, and filled the colonies with consternation. That they did not achieve more, arose not from lack of opportunity or means, but from two circumstances, —the unaccountable supineness of Villeneuve and Gravina, and the subsequent appearance of Lord Nelson. The safety of our islands hung as it were upon a hair. Instead of perceiving, with a sort of intuitive knowledge, that the enemy

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had steered for the West Indies, had Lord Nelson hesitated as to his course, or taken a wrong one, there can be little doubt that some of our colonies must have fallen. The Admiralty was, on this occasion, censured with a severity that does not seem to be unjust. It was asked, why the enemy's fleets were thus suffered to sail at pleasure from their ports, and why so inadequate a force had been assigned for the protection of such valuable possessions as our West-Indian colonies? No Englishman could, indeed, view without anger and disgust, the unusual spectacle of French squadrons setting our naval power at defiance; and compelling our islands to pay a heavy ransom, to save themselves from the horrors of fire and sword. Nor was it on this score alone that the Admiralty was blamed. Heavy complaints were also made with respect to the appointment of convoys, which was said to have been shamefully delayed, and inefficiently performed, to the heavy injury of the West India merchants and proprietors, and the still heavier sacrifice of numerous lives. The naval character of the country was subsequently redeemed by the glorious day of Trafalgar, but the honour of that day is due to the hero who fell in the moment of victory; and it must be remembered, too, that the loss which the combined powers then sustained was in no wise connected with the expeditions against our colonies; and that, therefore, it did not give the French

ruler that sort of lesson which would have taught him to be more cautious in future how he ventured to trust his squadrons upon hazardous enterprises in a distant quarter of the globe.

The ensuing campaign, that of 1806, was wholly naval, and, with one exception, was not marked by any event of importance. In spite of the recent disasters, Napoleon persisted in sending his fleets to sea. On the 13th of December, 1805, a squadron consisting of fifteen sail of the line, six frigates and four corvettes, sailed from Brest harbour. A part of this force was destined for St. Domingo, and the remainder for the Cape of Good Hope. After having been out ten days, the squadron divided; Vice-admiral Lesseigues with five sail of the line, two frigates and a corvette, proceeded to the West Indies; while the rest of the ships, under Admiral Guillaumez, continued their course to the Cape. Lesseigues moored in the road of St Domingo, on the 20th of January, and landed eighteen hundred men, with ammunition, and other necessary stores. He paused there, for more than a fortnight, to take in water, and repair damages; and this delay was fatal to him.

Lord Collingwood, on hearing that the French squadron was at sea, dispatched Admiral Sir John Duckworth in pursuit. Near the Cape de Verd islands, the British admiral had a glimpse of the

they contrived to elude him, and he

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could not again come in sight of them. He then steered for the West Indies, where he was joined by Admiral Cochrane, in the Northumberland, and Captain Pym in the Atlas. His force was now seven ships of the line and four frigates. At length he received information that the French were lying in St. Domingo bay, and thither he bent his course. When he arrived near the spot, he found the enemy in a compact line, under all sail, bearing down towards Ocoa bay, in which harbour they intended to take refuge, under the protection of the forts. By nine in the morning, however, the skilful manœuvres of Sir John Duckworth entirely frustrated this purpose, and made an action inevitable. The engagement commenced closely about ten o'clock. The French squadron defended itself with great gallantry for nearly two hours, but was at last compelled to give up the contest. The French admiral, in the Imperial of 120 guns, ran his ship on shore, and he was followed by the Diomed of 84 guns. The Alexander of 84 guns, and the Jupiter and Brave, of 74 guns each, hauled down their colours. The Imperial and the Diomed were afterwards burnt by the victors. The frigates and the corvette escaped. The loss of the British was sixty-four killed, and two hundred and ninety-four wounded. That of the enemy, in the three captured ships alone, was no less than seven hundred and sixty.

Another and even harder fate awaited the greatest part of the squadron of Guillaumez, but at a later period. After the division of the Brest fleet into two parts, that which was commanded by Guillaumez pursued its way towards the Cape of Good Hope. On his passage, however, the French admiral was informed that the Cape was in possession of the British. This intelligence induced him to change his course, and proceed to St. Salvador in Brazil, where he remained for some time to refresh his seamen, among whom scorbutic symptoms had begun to appear. He then sailed for the West Indies, where he arrived in the latter end of June. It was singularly unfortunate for the British that though, from some unexplained cause, this fleet parted company, and dropped into Fort Royal harbour by single ships, none of the British vessels on that station ever came up with them. The Veteran, commanded by Prince Jerome, the brother of Napoleon, was the first ship that entered Fort Royal harbour, and it was not till the end of four days that the whole squadron, consisting of six sail, was collected together.

Guillaumez sailed again from Martinico on the first of July, and was soon after joined by another ship of the line and three frigates. Had he stayed a few days longer, his flight would have been impracticable, as Sir John Borlase Warren arrived on the twelfth at Barbadoes, with six sail

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of the line. From Martinico Guillaumez steered to the north, followed by Sir Alexander Cochrane, who, having only half his enemy's force, did not think it prudent to bring him to action, but kept in sight, that he might be in readiness to afford succour to the islands, should any of them be attacked. The British admiral watched the French squadron till it arrived off Puerto Rico, when he returned to the southward, leaving two frigates to observe their movements.

The Veteran, commanded by Jerome Buonaparte, now quitted the fleet, and sailed homeward, and was fortunate enough to reach France in safety, after having, on her passage, destroyed six merchantmen of the Quebec convoy. The rest of the French ships were not so fortunate. On the 18th of August they were separated and severely shattered by a tremendous storm. The Foudroyant, the admiral's ship, was dismasted, and with difficulty made the Havannah, after a sharp action with the Anson frigate of forty guns, Captain Lydiard, who would have captured her, had she not taken refuge under the guns of the Moro castle. The Impeteux, of seventy-four guns, sought a shelter in the Chesapeake, where she was driven on shore and burned by the Bellisle, the Bellona, and the Melampus. Two other line of battle ships were, at a subsequent period, destroyed on the same coast. Of all the squadron, only two ships, the Veteran and

the Castor, ultimately succeeded in returning to France.

Only one attempt, and that proved an abortive one, was made by the French colonial commanders to molest the British. The crew of the Dominica sloop of war having mutinied and carried her into Guadaloupe, General Ernouf remanned her, embarked seventy-three soldiers on board, and sent her, in conjunction with a schooner, to cut out the merchantmen who were lying in Roseau bay. Both vessels were, however, captured by the British cruizers, who had received timely information of the plan which they had formed.

The last action of the year which claims to be noticed is the capture of the Pomona Spanish frigate of thirty-eight guns, from Vera Cruz, with treasure on board. This was accomplished by Captain Brisbane, in the Arethusa, and Captain Lydiard, in the Anson, under circumstances which did honour to their zeal and courage. On the twenty-third of August, the Pomona was descried, about two miles from the Havannah, by the British, who immediately chased her. To escape from her pursuers, she ran close in shore, into shallow water, where she could be supported by sixteen guns from the Moro castle. At the same time twelve gun-boats, each carrying a twelve pounder and a hundred men, came out of the harbour to her assistance, and formed a co-

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vering line. Notwithstanding this formidable array, and the danger of a hostile lee shore, Captain Brisbane anchored the Arethusa close along-side of the Pomona, in only one foot more water than his vessel drew. He was ably seconded by Captain Lydiard. In thirty-five minutes the Spanish frigate struck her colours, three gun-boats were blown up, six were sunk, and three driven and wrecked among the breakers, and the castle, which had commenced firing red-hot shot, was laid in ruins by an explosion The loss of the Spaniards was several hundred men, few being saved from the gun-boats; that of the British was two killed and thirty-two wounded.

The year 1807 presents to our view but few enterprises of importance undertaken by the British; but one of those few is marked by such splendid valour as to crown those who were engaged in it with lasting glory. It has, indeed, more of the character of romance than of sober historical fact. Thinking it probable that the inhabitants of Curaçoa would not be averse from putting themselves under English protection, Vice-admiral Dacres dispatched a squadron of four frigates, the Arethusa, the Anson, the Latona, and the Fisgard, under Captain Charles Brisbane, who had so greatly distinguished himself in the capture of the Pomona, to try what could be accomplished by treaty. It does not

appear that the British captain had any instructions to resort to arms. He, however, determined to try what could be done by arms, in case negociation should fail. The squadron arrived off the harbour of Curaçoa at day-break, on the first of January. Having passed the whole extensive line of sea-batteries, which kept up a fruitless fire, Captain Brisbane anchored the squadron in a position ready for the attack, and, amidst the cannonade of the enemy, wrote on the capstern of his ship a summons to the governor, demanding a surrender in five minutes, and threatening an instant assault, if another shot were discharged from the shore.

This summons was disregarded by the governor, who probably thought that the menace of an assault was not seriously made. He was, in truth, not to be blamed for relying upon his own force, and undervaluing that of his enemy. The defences of the harbour were of such strength, that it did not appear at all probable that four frigates would venture even to come within reach of their fire, much less attempt the seemingly desperate achievement of carrying them by storm. The harbour, the entrance of which is not fifty yards wide, was protected by regular fortifications, of two tiers of cannon. Sixty-six guns were mounted on Fort Amsterdam alone; and athwart the narrow entrance of the port were moored the Dutch frigate Hatslar of thirty-six

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guns, the Surinam of twenty-two guns, and two large schooners. A chain of forts covered the commanding heights of Misleberg, and, at grape-shot distance, the harbour was enfiladed by the nearly impregnable fortress of Fort Republique.

Well knowing, however, that courage and skill can supply the want of other resources, Captain Brisbane resolved to put his threat into execution. He had already arranged with his brother captains the plan of attack. He was admirably seconded by the spirit of his men, which was entirely in unison with his own. Even before they were informed of the service on which they were to be employed, they had anticipated their leader's intention; and, accordingly, when they were summoned to quarters, they were found to be fully prepared for action, and so resolutely bent on their purpose, that they had chalked on their hats the words "Victory or death!"

As soon as his summons was answered in the negative, Captain Brisbane got under sail. At a quarter after six he led the way into the harbour, in the Arethusa, followed by Captain Wood in the Latona, Captain Lydiard in the Anson, and Captain Bolton in the Fisgard, all officers well worthy of seconding such a leader. Just at the critical moment when the headmost ship turned round the point of the harbour's mouth, the wind became so unfavourable that it

was impossible for her to fetch in, and equally impossible for her to retire. The British, however, were not long in this painful situation. A squall fortunately came on, during which the wind shifted two points, and enabled them to proceed close together to the destined spot. The gallant daring of the assailants had the natural effect of daunting their opponents. The latter, nevertheless, opened a heavy fire; but they soon found that the contest was to be carried on hand to hand. Orders were given to board. Captain Brisbane was the first man who boarded the Hatslar, the colours of which he himself tore down. Her commander being killed, she surrendered, and was taken possession of by the Latona. In the mean time, part of the crew of the Anson, led by Captain Lydiard, boarded the Surinam from their larboard bow, while the remainder of the crew were occupied in assailing the batteries from their starboard guns. The captain of the Surinam being dangerously wounded, she also struck. The schooners shared the same fate, and now nothing remained afloat to oppose the progress of the British.

The instant that he had struck the colours of the Hatslar, and given her in charge to the Latona, Captain Brisbane, with a handful of men, hastened on shore, where he was almost immediately joined by Captain Lydiard. The officers and ship's companies were promptly disembarked,

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and they next proceeded to storm the forts, the citadel and the town. This was done with unexampled rapidity. By seven o'clock, the lower forts, Fort Amsterdam, which was garrisoned by two hundred and seventy-five regular troops, and the town of Amsterdam, were in the power of the British. Captain Brisbane was the first man that entered Fort Amsterdam, and he had once more the pleasure of pulling down the Batavian standard.

Having been thus far successful, the British commander had an interview with the governor, to whom he allowed five minutes to decide upon the surrender of the colony. On the entreaty of the governor, who pleaded that his head would be the forfeit if he decided so rapidly, this time was extended to half an hour. At the expiration of that period, Captain Brisbane entered the council chamber, and required the governor and council to make known their determination. The result was the delivering up of the island to his Britannic majesty, on condition that those who did not choose to take the oath of allegiance, should be considered as prisoners of war, and conveyed to Holland. By ten o'clock the British colours were hoisted on Fort Republique, and the whole of the colony was in quiet possession of the victors. The militia, consisting of one thousand two hundred men, was shortly afterwards disarmed. This conquest was effected by

no more than eight hundred men, and the loss sustained was only three slain and fourteen wounded. The loss of the enemy was much heavier; it amounted to two hundred men killed: —a striking proof how much more wise, as well as more noble, it is to brave danger manfully, than to seek a delusive and shameful safety in flight.

Scarcely less deserving of applause for its bravery, though of less importance in its consequences, is an exploit which was performed by Captain Dacres, in the Bacchante, accompanied by Captain Wise, in the Mediator. The bay of Samana, which is situated on the north-east side of St. Domingo, having long been a nuisance to the British trade in the neighbouring seas, as it afforded a safe shelter to a swarm of privateers, Captain Dacres resolved to attempt the expulsion of the enemy, who had established themselves there. The navigation into the bay being exceedingly difficult, Captain Dacres formed a scheme for passing its intricacies, without encountering opposition. For this purpose, on the 20th of February, he sent in, under her own colours, a schooner which he had recently captured. She was followed by his own ship, disguised as a prize, and the Mediator as a neutral. The scheme was successful. The British passed every obstacle, and anchored within half a mile of the fort, before the stratagem was discovered by the enemy. The fort then opened a heavy fire,

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which was as warmly returned for the space of four hours. At the expiration of that time the seamen and marines were landed, and the fort, though commandingly situated, was taken by storm. That part of the garrison which was not put to the sword, escaped into the woods. Two prize vessels, and two privateers fitting out for sea, were found in the harbour. Previously to their departure, the British destroyed the fort and the cannon, and thus rendered the harbour, at least for some time to come, of little utility as a place of refuge.

The year was closed by the bloodless conquest of the Danish colonies of St. John, St. Thomas and Santa Cruz. A war having broken out with Denmark, the British ministers, early in September, sent out orders to the naval and military commanders to reduce those islands. These orders were easily carried into effect, the enemy not having any means of resisting the powerful force which was arrayed against them. All that they asked was, that they might be allowed to ascertain its amount before they concluded a capitulation. St. Thomas and St. John surrendered on the 21st of December, and Santa Cruz on the 25th of the same month.

CHAPTER IX.

Naval and military events of 1808.—*Pursuit of the Rochefort squadron.*—*Capture of the Thetis frigate.*—*Mariegalante and Deseada taken.*—*Fruitless attempt of the French to recover Mariegalante.*—*Unsuccessful attempt upon St. Martin's.*—*Surrender of Samana.*—*The war in the West Indies carried on with more spirit in* 1809.—*Cayenne reduced by the British and Portuguese.*—*An expedition sent against Martinico.*—*The island is reduced by the British.*—*Surrender of the Saints.*—*Capture of the Hautpoult and a frigate.*—*Capitulation of the city of Santo Domingo.*—*Gallant defence of the Junon.*—*Two French frigates destroyed at Guadaloupe.*—*Capture of the Nisus corvette, and the forts at La Haye.*—*Campaign of* 1810.—*Conquest of Guadaloupe, St. Martin's, St. Eustatia and Saba.*—*Conclusion.*

SEEMINGLY exhausted and dispirited by the losses of the two preceding years, and having also need of all his resources to carry on his continental designs, Napoleon, during the year 1808,

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desisted from making any efforts in the West Indies. The Rochefort squadron, which got out of that port in January, was indeed for a while supposed to be gone to succour the French colonies, or to annoy ours; and was consequently pursued by Sir John Duckworth, who looked into Martinico, coasted along St. Domingo, visited the Chesapeake, and returned to England, after a fruitless cruize of thirteen thousand miles. The long-sought enemy was, in the mean time, safe at anchor in the harbour of Toulon.

It does not appear that, even by single ships, more than one attempt was made by the French, in the course of this year, to send assistance to their remaining western colonies. That attempt was an unfortunate one. The ship dispatched was the Thetis, of forty-four guns, which sailed from L'Orient, with troops and stores for Martinico. She was, however, speedily conducted to a much nearer port. Scarcely had she cleared the harbour of port Louis, on the night of the 10th of August, than she was fallen in with by the Amethyst, of thirty-six guns, commanded by Captain Michael Seymour A most sanguinary contest ensued, which continued, with unabating fury, for two hours and a half. For an hour the ships lay fast alongside of each other, the fluke of one of the Amethyst's anchors having hooked into the main-deck port of the Thetis. The enemy's ship, wholly dismasted, and exceedingly

shattered, was at length carried by boarding. The loss on our side was severe, it being seventy killed and wounded; on that of the French it was enormous, as it amounted to no less than a hundred and thirty-five killed, and a hundred and two wounded, among whom were all the officers except three, the captain, M. Pinsun, a gallant and skilful man, being one of the slain.

During this eventful year, Great Britain, like her rival, was too much occupied nearer home, to undertake any enterprise of moment in this distant part of the world. Embarked as a principal in the Peninsular war, and but just beginning to exert herself as a military power, she had at present no troops to spare for colonial expeditions. The war, therefore, languished in the west. All that was done, was done by the spirit and intelligence of those officers who commanded there.

Such was the case with respect to the capture of Mariegalante and Deseada, which was effected by Captain Selby with a small force of seamen and marines. The first of these islands lies a few miles to the south-east of Guadaloupe; the second nearly the same distance to the north-east. As colonies these islands were objects of only secondary importance, though Mariegalante is not ill cultivated; but the possession of them was desirable, because they formed an excellent shelter for privateers, and, from their position in

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advance of Guadaloupe, were a material obstacle to the close blockade of that colony. This induced Captain Selby, of the Cerberus, to attempt their reduction. Two hundred seamen and marines, under Captain Pigott, were landed in Mariegalante, on the second of March; and the enemy being taken unawares, surrendered at discretion. Deseada submitted on the 13th of March. The French at first were disposed to resist, but a short cannonade from the Cerberus put their courage to flight, and they hauled down their colours. As it was not thought expedient to station any troops here, the batteries were destroyed, an oath of neutrality was administered to the inhabitants, and a sloop and a brig were left off the coast, to prevent the governor of Guadaloupe from attempting to regarrison the island.

Deseada the governor allowed to remain unmolested, but Mariegalante was so good a privateer station, and its loss also brought the British so much more nearly in contact with him, that he determined to try to recover it. The attempt was made on the 23d of August, by Colonel Cambriel, who, with about two hundred men, in seventeen boats, stole over from Guadaloupe, and landed near Grand Bourg. They were preparing to attack the battery when they were espied from the Circe, thirty of whose seamen hurried on shore, threw themselves into the battery before the French could reach it, and gave them such a

warm reception as compelled them to retreat. The enemy's boats were seized by the Circe, and the escape of the French being thus cut off, they retired towards the centre of the island. Intelligence of their landing was forwarded to General Beckwith, at Barbadoes, who lost no time in sending Lieutenant-colonel Blackwell, with three companies against them. The French, when the British troops disembarked, were within three miles of Grand Bourg. On the approach of Lieutenant-colonel Blackwell, however, they quitted their position, and were pursued for five days and nights. They four times endeavoured to make a stand, but were as often defeated; and, at length, seeing no hope of either succour or escape, they surrendered as prisoners of war. A lugger privateer from Guadaloupe, with a howitzer and a supply of ammunition for them, was previously captured by one of our cruizers, and this capture doubtless accelerated their submission.

An equal good fortune did not attend the British, in an attempt which they made upon the island of St. Martin's. This, too, was a place of refuge for a swarm of privateers, and it was, therefore, desirable that they should be deprived of it. Some erroneous information which had been received, induced a belief that it was held by no considerable force, and might be conquered by a sudden and vigorous attack. Under this

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fatal belief, the Wanderer sloop of war, and the Subtle, Balahou and Elizabeth schooners appeared off the island in the commencement of July. The seamen and marines, to the number of only a hundred and thirty, led by Lieutenant Spearing of the Subtle, were landed on the third of that month. The lower fort, of six guns, was carried, and the guns were spiked. But, in advancing up the rocky heights, covered with the prickly pear, the fire from the upper fort was so destructive, that it was impossible for the assailants to advance to the summit, and every moment diminished their scanty force. Lieutenant Spearing was shot through the breast, within ten yards of the fort, and immediately expired. His fall disheartened his men, who withdrew towards their boats; but, their retreat being by this time cut off, they were compelled to surrender. It was, in fact, impossible for them to continue the contest with the slightest hope of success. The enemy, who had been warned of their intention early enough to make every preparation to frustrate it, were rather more than nine hundred men. The prisoners were, however, released on a flag of truce being sent on shore from the ships; and the victors proved that they were not undeserving of their success, by the honours which they paid to the remains of their gallant foe. Lieutenant Spearing was interred with all the honours of war, the French commander him-

self attended the funeral, and he also gave leave to a part of the crew of the Subtle to come on shore, for the purpose of performing the last sad duties to their brave and valued leader.

The expulsion of the French from Samana closed the warlike operations of the year 1808. On a former occasion, they had been defeated, and driven for a while into the woods, but they had not been compelled wholly to abandon the post. The possession of the bay of Samana, and of the bordering territory, has long been coveted by the French. This harbour, the most advantageously situated of any in St. Domingo, is capable of being converted into a serious means of annoyance, as a naval establishment and arsenal. The bay is large and sheltered, and has excellent anchorage; and the entrance of it may with ease be fortified so as to preclude all hostile access. A river navigable for twenty leagues, the Yuna, which empties itself into the head of the bay, affords a ready opening to the neighbouring country, where may be procured all the sorts of timber proper for the construction of a navy, and where are mines of copper, capable of furnishing an abundant supply of metal for the casting of cannon. A fleet stationed here would keep the surrounding islands in a state of perpetual alarm and peril. Even now Samana was become a grievous nuisance to the West-India trade, from its being a constant shelter to the numerous pri-

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vateers which infested the various passages to the windward of this island. This circumstance, and the wish to facilitate the blockade of the city of Santo Domingo, which the Spaniards were now carrying on, induced Captain Dashwood, of the Franchise, with five ships, which chance had brought together, to undertake the task of rooting out the enemy. He arrived at Samana on the tenth of November, and found the French permanently establishing themselves, and erecting batteries which, when completed, would have made the place tenable against almost any force that could be sent to attack it. As, however, they were not yet prepared for resistance, they laid down their arms, and gave up the privateers and other vessels which were at anchor in the bay. Having accomplished his purpose, Captain Dashwood delivered up the town to a Spanish officer.

The campaign of 1809 was marked by events of a more important nature than occurred in that of the preceding year. The colonial dominions of France were attacked in various quarters, and every where with equal success; the mother country being too deeply engaged in endeavouring to subjugate the continent of Europe, to have many resources to spare for the defence of her distant possessions. It is probable, too, that the system which Napoleon was now pursuing more openly than ever, induced him to regard the loss

of the French colonies with much less regret than he otherwise would have done. The transfer was in his opinion but a temporary one. He looked forward to the complete submission of the continental states, the ruin of the manufactures and commerce of Great Britain, and the consequent drying up of all her means of resistance; and, if this ardently desired event should come to pass, he knew that at least every thing which had been wrested from him, in whatever part of the world, must necessarily be surrendered up, and even be thought a trifling sacrifice, as the price of a feverish, inglorious, and perilous peace. He had tried to cope with the British navy; he had failed. There now only remained to try whether it was not possible to reduce that navy to inaction, by cutting off one of the "main nerves of war," the pecuniary supplies which were the spring of its motion. It was in Europe, and on the land, that he hoped to reconquer his colonies; and it must be owned that there alone had he any chance of once more making them a portion of his empire.

The first of the French colonies which fell in the course of this year was that of Cayenne. To England it was an object of some moment to drive the enemy from this settlement, as her doing this would contribute to the safety of Surinam and Demerara, and at the same time deprive the French cruizers of a place of shelter

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and equipment. In the conquest of Cayenne, however, the British acted only in the character of auxiliaries; that of principals being assumed by the Portuguese. By the arrival of the Prince Regent of Portugal in the Brazils, a new spirit was given to that province; and as, perhaps, the Prince Regent's ministers justly imagined that Victor Hugues was not likely to be a quiet neighbour, or even an honourable enemy, it was wisely resolved to secure the Brazilian frontier by expelling the French from Cayenne.

The force appropriated to this purpose was but small. It consisted of no more than five hundred and fifty Portuguese soldiers, under Lieutenant-colonel Manoel Marques; two Portuguese sloops and some light vessels; and the Confiance British frigate, commanded by Captain James Lucas Yeo, a brave and intelligent officer, who is said to have been the suggester of this enterprise. The Portuguese troops took the field in the beginning of December. Having, in conjunction with the British, reduced the district of Oyapok on the eighth, and that of Approaque on the fifteenth, they prepared to complete their labour, by the reduction of the island of Cayenne.

The expedition arrived off the mouth of the Mahuree, on the east side of the island, on the sixth of January. In the evening Captain Yeo proceeded with two hundred and fifty men, in

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ten canoes, to make himself master of two batteries, the one, called Fort Diamant, commanding the entrance of the river, the other, called Grand Cane, covering the great road to the town of Cayenne. The vessels and the remainder of the troops were ordered to follow after dusk, anchor at the mouth of the Mahuree, and wait till he gave the signal that the batteries were carried, when they were to hasten forward, and disembark the men as expeditiously as possible. With five canoes, the rest being too heavy to keep up with him, he pushed on shore, about three o'clock in the morning, midway between the two batteries. The canoes were almost instantaneously dashed to pieces by the violence of the surf. Sending one part of his little division to the left, against the battery of Grand Cane, he himself marched with the other against Fort Diamant. Though these forts mounted five guns, and were defended by ninety men, they were both taken by storm, with trifling loss, except that of Lieutenant Read, who was mortally wounded in the assault of Fort Diamant. A way being thus opened into the river, the whole of the troops were put on shore in the course of the morning.

The two commanders having received information that Victor Hugues, with a thousand men, was on his march from Cayenne to attack them, they resolved to dismantle Fort Diamant, and concentrate their forces at Grand Cane. The

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business of destroying the fort was entrusted to Captain Mulcaster and a party of seamen from the Confiance. On reaching Grand Cane, Captain Yeo discovered that, about a mile up the river, on opposite sides of it, and crossing their fire within half gun-shot, there were two batteries. One of these was on an eminence, overlooking the creek which leads to the town of Cayenne; the other was at the mouth of a similar inlet, leading to the house and plantation of Victor Hugues, and was obviously constructed solely for the purpose of protecting his property. Each of them had two nine pounders and fifty men. To reduce these batteries, the Lion and Venganza cutters were anchored abreast of them, and the action was smartly continued on both sides for an hour; but finding at length that the ships were not a match for them in weight of metal, and that he was rapidly losing his men by the shower of grape shot which the enemy poured from their guns, Captain Yeo determined to carry them by assault. He himself led one party to the attack. Though both detachments were obliged to effect their landing under the very muzzles of the cannon and musketry, which kept up an incessant fire, yet the assailants advanced with such determined bravery, that they bore down all opposition, and put the enemy to flight.

While this was passing, Victor Hugues, with the division from Cayenne, fell upon Colonel

Marques, who was posted with the rest of the troops at Grand Cane, and who gallantly kept the superior strength of the French at bay, till Captain Yeo could return to his assistance. After a sharp contest of three hours, the baffled Hugues measured back his steps to Cayenne. Another division of the enemy, two hundred and fifty in number, had, in the mean time, appeared before Fort Diamant, from which, however, they had withdrawn, on perceiving that Lieutenant Mulcaster was prepared to give them battle.

There now remained to drive a party of 100 men from the house of Victor Hugues, which had been converted into a tolerably strong post. This house was situated at the end of an avenue, of between two and three miles in length, having on its right a thick wood, and on its left a creek. The troops, on the morning of the eighth, being ready to advance to the attack, Captain Yeo sent Lieutenant Mulcaster, with a flag of truce, to demand the surrender of the post; promising, in case of submission, that no damage should be sustained by the property. When the lieutenant was within a boat's length of the house, the enemy treacherously fired two vollies, and then retreated. Attributing this base conduct to some unauthorised individual, the flag of truce was once more dispatched by Captain Yeo, and was now received by a discharge from a field piece. His patience not yet exhausted, the British cap-

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tain entrusted his message to a slave of the governor, who returned from the French officer, saying that all communications must be made in writing. At the same moment, the French commanding officer began firing from his field-piece, and was seconded by the musketry of a body of troops, which he had posted in ambush in the wood. As several cuts had been made in the road, so that it was impossible for the British and Portuguese to bring forward their gun, they threw it into one of the cuts, and dashed forward with pike and bayonet to attack the enemy. They were soon master of the field-piece, the French retiring into the house, from the windows of which they kept up a smart fire, till the assailants broke in, and scattered them in all directions. The house and every thing near it, except the dwellings of the slaves, was levelled with the ground, as a punishment for the shameful and cowardly treatment of the flag of truce.

To keep the combined troops at a distance from the town of Cayenne, Victor Hugues resolved to take post at Beauregard plain, which is situated on an eminence commanding several roads to the town. In this, however, he was anticipated by the Portuguese and British, who seized upon the position on the ninth of January. Lieutenant-colonel Marques and Captain Yeo then summoned the governor to give up the colony. Dispirited by his past ill success, and

probably also by his personal fears and the destruction of his property, Victor Hugues, though his force was yet much superior to that of his antagonists, relinquished every idea of further resistance. The articles of capitulation were arranged on the twelfth, and on the fourteenth the Portuguese and British took possession of the place. In this last act of his military existence, Victor Hugues was as contemptible as he had formerly been hateful. It was even laughable to hear this man, who had delighted in spreading devastation all around him with fire and sword, and had been the great instigator of the negroes to rebellion and bloodshed, it was laughable to hear him whining about "the destructive system of liberating the slaves, and burning the plantations;" and to see him likewise cloaking his cowardice under the garb of humanity and patriotism, and protesting that he was induced to surrender less by the force which was opposed to him, than by the desire of "saving the colony from total destruction, and preserving the subjects of his august master." This is the last time that there will be occasion to advert to this notorious personage, who had long been so malignantly active, and who, it is obvious, preserved, to the close of his public career, all his inherent baseness.

This conquest was made under many disadvantages. From the fifteenth of December up

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to the period of the capitulation, the seamen and marines never slept in their beds, their exertions were incessant, the weather was boisterous and rainy, and the roads were nearly impassable. Nor when the French flag was struck, were the toils of the conquerors entirely over. The prisoners were above a thousand in number, and it was a task of some difficulty to keep them in safe custody, till a Portuguese reinforcement could be obtained from Para. It was, however, effected, by putting them on board the Portuguese vessels, and running the Confiance on the beach, between them and the town, to act as a land battery. Till the arrival of the reinforcements from Para, which was five weeks, Captain Yeo and his officers were compelled to sleep in their clothes, and completely armed. Scarcely one of the officers or men escaped a severe and lingering illness. Captain Yeo was two months confined to his bed, on the verge of death, and did not recover his health but by returning to England. As a reward for his services, he was made a knight of the order of St. Bento d' Avis, by the Prince Regent of Portugal, he being the first protestant by whom that honour was ever received.

The capitulation was just signed when the Topaze frigate, of forty-four guns, appeared in the offing, with succours of all kinds from France. There were then only twenty-five Englishmen and twenty negroes on board the Confiance, and

no other officers than two youths and Lieutenant Acott; yet the latter officer contrived, by his skilful manœuvres and his apparent readiness for action, to drive the enemy's ship from the coast. On quitting Cayenne, the Topaze sailed to Guadaloupe, and was captured, under one of the batteries of that island, by the Cleopatra and Jason frigates.

The want of a sufficient force, or the want of vigour, had hitherto prevented any attack from being made by the British on the two principal West Indian islands of France. It was now the seventh year of the war, and the French flag was still flying at Martinico and Guadaloupe. The ministers at length resolved to begin in earnest the work of expelling the enemy from his western colonies. Martinico was chosen as the first object of attack. As a preliminary to military operations, a close watch was kept around the island by our cruizers, to interrupt the arrival of succours; and in the execution of this service, sharp encounters sometimes took place with the batteries on shore. The most obstinate and sanguinary of these occurred on the 11th and 12th of December, 1807, when the Circe, Amaranth and Stork sustained a loss of nearly seventy men, in attempting to bring out an eighteen gun brig and two schooners, laden with flour, guns and cartridge-paper, which had been run on the beach under the protection of the batteries,

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several field-pieces, and a large number of troops. They failed to carry off the vessels, but, after a severe struggle, renewed on the second day, they succeeded in burning one of the schooners, driving the other upon the rocks, and destroying the brig. It must be owned that this success, though it did honour to the courage and perseverance of the victors, was purchased at a price too extravagant to be frequently paid.

The necessary preparations for an enterprise of such magnitude as the reduction of Martinico occupied a considerable time. By the latter end of January, however, they were completed, and the army was ready for embarkation at Barbadoes. The command of the expedition was entrusted to Lieutenant-general Beckwith. The force under his orders was the largest which had, for a long while, been collected together in the West Indies. It was between nine and ten thousand men. The armament sailed from Barbadoes on the 28th of January, and appeared off Martinico on the following day. Two opposite points were fixed on for the disembarkation, in order to divide the enemy's force, and distract their attention. The first of these was in Bay Robert, on the windward coast; the other at St. Luce, on the opposite side of the island, near the spot where Sir Charles Grey landed in the month of February, 1794. The division which was intended to be put on shore in Bay Robert

consisted of between six and seven thousand men, led by Lieutenant-general Sir George Prevost; the division designed for St. Luce was confided to Major-general Maitland, and was somewhat more than three thousand strong. These divisions were to advance simultaneously towards the height of Bruneau and Sourier, where the enemy held an entrenched camp, for the purpose of covering Fort Desaix, formerly Fort Bourbon, the chief defence of the colony.

The two disembarkations were effected without opposition; that at St. Luce in the morning of the thirtieth, that in Bay Robert on the afternoon of the same day. The colonists were found not to be hostile, and the militia were by no means averse from complying with a proclamation by which the British commanders recommended to them to forbear from resistance, and return to their homes. While the troops were disembarking at St. Luce, six hundred men were detached, under Major Henderson, to secure for the men of war and transports a safe anchorage in Fort Royal bay, by taking possession of the battery at Point Solomon, on the south side of the bay. Pigeon Island was at the same time invested, and five mortars and howitzers were opened upon it with such effect, from a commanding height, that the garrison of 136 men capitulated on the third of February. The French, seeing the British vessels advancing into the harbour, set

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fire to the Amphitrite, of forty-four guns, and the whole of their shipping. They had previously destroyed the Carnation brig at Cul de Sac Marin, and a corvette at St. Pierre's. They likewise abandoned Fort Royal, destroying the guns and magazines, and concentrating all their force in Fort Desaix and its immediate vicinity.

The division which landed in Bay Robert marched seven miles the same night, through a difficult country, and, before day-break on the thirty-first, occupied a position on the banks of the Grand Lezard river. From this place Lieutenant-general Prevost pushed on with a part of the army towards Morne Bruneau, and at day-light, on the first of February, he was joined by Brigadier-general Hoghton with the twenty-third regiment and the light infantry battalion. On the first and second, the heights of Bruneau, Desforneaux and Sourier were vigorously attacked by Lieutenant-general Prevost, the honourable Lieutenant-colonel Pakenham, and Brigadier-general Hoghton. The contest was obstinate on both days, but it terminated to the advantage of the British, who carried all the positions, and compelled the French to fall back to their entrenched camp. In the night of the second, the enemy also abandoned two of their advanced redoubts, with evident marks of disorder. The success of these two days cost the victors between four and five hundred men in killed and

wounded. The only officers slain were Captain Taylor of the Royal Fusileers, Major Maxwell of the eighth regiment, and Captain Sinclair of the twenty-fifth. The loss sustained by the French was considerable, though perhaps not equal to that of their assailants.

Major-general Maitland, meanwhile, had reached Lamentin, on the road to Fort Royal; and, on the third, he effected his junction with the first division. On the eighth he moved onward, and took up a position at Lacoste, above Point Negro, and thus formed the investment of Fort Desaix on the western side. The squadron was at the same time stationed on that side of the bay, with the two-fold view of opening an early communication with the head-quarters of the army, and likewise of putting readily on shore the necessary supplies for the siege of Fort Desaix. The towns of Trinity and St. Pierre were now taken possession of by the British, who were also masters of all the coast between St. Pierre and Fort Royal, the French having abandoned and destroyed the whole of the batteries.

The defeats which they had sustained, on the first and second, decided the fate of the enemy in the field. All that now remained for them was to protract as long as possible the defence of Fort Desaix, in the hope, a feeble hope, that some favourable circumstance might occur to frustrate the designs of the besiegers. They, perhaps, placed

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some reliance upon the rains, which were incessant, and of course rendered the duties of the besieging army more than usually difficult and fatiguing. To concentrate all their military means, they evacuated all the distant posts and redoubts, and withdrew the troops into Fort Desaix. The lower fort, denominated by the British Fort Edward, was one of the relinquished works, and was entered by the besiegers on the morning of the eighth.

Fort Desaix, once called Fort Bourbon, and, while formerly in our possession, bearing the name of Fort George, was situated upon, and covered the summit of an eminence, above the town of Fort Royal. It was of an irregular pentagonal form, following the outline of the ground upon which it stood, and was of very considerable strength. Advanced in front of it, at the distance of two hundred yards, and communicating with it by a covered way, was a strong lunette or redoubt, named the Bouillé redoubt. The whole was defended by more than a hundred and twenty cannon and mortars, and a garrison of two thousand two hundred men, under the command of the captain-general, Villaret Joyeuse.

Till the nineteenth of the month, the army was incessantly occupied in constructing gun and mortar batteries, and in landing and dragging to their stations the cannon, mortars, howitzers,

and needful stores. In this service the sailors, directed by Commodore Cockburn and Captains Barton and Nesham, were uncommonly active. On the afternoon of the nineteenth, six batteries on the western side being completed, a tremendous fire was opened on the fort, from fourteen cannon and twenty-eight mortars and howitzers. One of these batteries was fought entirely by seamen. While this was going on, four hundred seamen and marines were strenuously employed in dragging artillery up Morne Sourier, and other heights on the eastern side, where five additional batteries were begun. This was an exceedingly difficult task, the rains being heavy, the roads deep, and the ground rugged and precipitous. A part of it was, however, accomplished by the twenty-second, and in four days more all the new batteries, six in number, would have been ready to open on the fort.

For a few hours the garrison kept up their fire with much spirit; but it gradually slackened till the following morning, when it entirely ceased, except at long intervals. Such a storm of shot and shells was poured in upon them that most of their guns were dismounted, and they were compelled to take shelter in the casemates, there not being a single spot within the works that was not ploughed up by the missiles from the British batteries.

Perceiving that the other batteries were also

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nearly ready to open upon him, M. Villaret Joyeuse sent out a flag of truce, and proposed to capitulate, on condition that the garrison should be allowed to return to France, without any restriction as to their future service. This being refused, the parley was broken off, and the bombardment was recommenced, and continued till the next morning, when one of the magazines of the fort blew up, with a terrific explosion. Three flags of truce were now hoisted by the governor, and the result of this was, that, on the twenty-sixth, a capitulation was concluded, by which the French troops became prisoners of war, but were to be sent to France, and immediately exchanged. The governor and his aides-de-camp were set at liberty unconditionally, as a testimony of respect for his character. As if he foresaw what afterwards took place, M. Villaret endeavoured to stipulate that Fort Desaix should not be demolished; but this article was rejected, and the fort was subsequently destroyed by the British commanders.

Thus, within twenty-eight days from the time when the expedition sailed, and in spite of adverse weather and other obstacles, the conquest of Martinico was completed by the perseverance and valour of the military and naval forces, who, on this occasion, acted together with a spirit of unanimity and mutual succour, which, unfortunately, is not always displayed in conjunct operations.

Previously to the fall of Martinico, a squadron, of three sail of the line and two frigates, had been dispatched from L'Orient to the relief of that island. These vessels, however, arrived too late, the military operations having been pushed forward with such spirit that the colony was already in the possession of the British. Their purpose being thus frustrated, they took shelter at the Saints, whither they were followed by Sir Alexander Cochrane, who held them blockaded with a superior force.

The Saints lie nearly midway between Guadaloupe and Mariegalante, and consist of four small islets, and two large islands, the latter of which bear the names Terre d'en haut, and Terre d'en bas, or upper and lower Saint. The harbour or road is between the group of islands. On the upper Saint were two forts, called Forts Napoleon and Morelle, the first of which contained fourteen pieces of artillery and five mortars. On the diminutive island of Cabrit, on the right of the port, was another fort, mounting eight guns and two mortars. These forts were held by about seven or eight hundred men.

By driving the French from the Saints, the double purpose would be answered of capturing or forcing to sea the French squadron, and of investing Guadaloupe more closely on the eastern side. Lieutenant-general Beckwith, therefore, dispatched Major-general Maitland, with

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between two and three thousand men, to make himself master of those islands. The troops effected a landing at Ance Bois Joly, on the 14th of April, with no other opposition than a fruitless cannonade from Fort Cabrit, the guns of which fired at random over the ridge among the shipping. The enemy occupied a position on Mount Russel, which is eight hundred feet in height, slopes at an angle of fifty degrees, and is covered with bushes and prickly pear. The rifle companies of the third and fourth battalions of the sixty-ninth regiment, under Captains Dalling and Lupton, supported by the flank companies of the third West-India regiment, and a company of the Royal York Rangers, led by Lieutenant-colonel Campbell, were ordered to dislodge them, and this service they accomplished, in spite of the nature of the ground, and the resistance of the French. From the summit they had a view of the forts, the men-of-war, and the frigates. Two eight-inch howitzers were speedily got up, and the fire was opened upon the vessels at a fair distance. It was so well directed that, in the course of a few hours, the three line of battle ships were compelled to push to sea; the frigates had already sailed, at an early period of the day. Their movements were made known to the British fleet by the signals which had previously been agreed upon.

As the troops could not advance on the west

side, without being flanked by Fort Cabrit, the greatest part of them were re-embarked, to be landed at Ance Vanovre; on the left side of which bay the French were posted on strong and commanding ground. To dislodge them from this position, and protect the landing, the remainder of the troops were marched down against them from Mount Russel. This movement was effectually performed, the enemy were driven back, and the army having advanced to a spot whence shells could be thrown into Forts Cabrit and Napoleon, a battery of six mortars was speedily constructed.

On the night of the fifteenth, a strong picket of the enemy was surprised by two companies of the Royal York Rangers, commanded by Captain Starke and Lieutenant White, and routed, with considerable loss in killed and wounded. The French troops still occupied a ridge, on the back of the town, between Forts Napoleon and Morelle, and from this post General Maitland determined to drive them into the forts. On the approach of the British they withdrew, but, the next morning, having discovered the value of this position, they made a vigorous effort to regain it. A spirited action took place, in which, however, though aided by a heavy fire from the three forts, they were completely defeated In this contest the black troops distinguished themselves by their discipline and valour.

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The batteries being ready to open, the French governor, Colonel Madier, sent out a flag of truce; and, after a fruitless attempt to obtain better conditions, the garrison surrendered, on the eighteenth, as prisoners of war.

The situation of the Saints, which gave the enemy three openings, in as many different directions, to escape through, made it difficult for Sir Alexander Cochrane, who had only five sail of the line, to bring an equal force against them on any one point, or to intercept them in their flight. It was late in the evening before the signals gave notice to Admiral Cochrane that the enemy had sailed, and that they were gone both to windward and leeward, the line of battle ships having steered a different course from the frigates.

At the moment when the three men of war put to sea, the Pompée, Captain Fahie, was watching the coast, and she immediately chased them. She was joined, soon after, by the admiral's ship, the Neptune. It was by this time so dark that, although the enemy passed at no great distance from the Neptune, and even fired into her, it was impossible for Admiral Cochrane to distinguish whether they were of the line or frigates; and this circumstance embarrassed his measures, as, had the French line of battle ships remained behind, it would have been dangerous to deprive the troops on shore of the support of

his squadron. At day-break, however, their strength was ascertained, and they were pursued by the Pompée, the Neptune, the Latona, the Castor, and the Recruit brig, the commander of which last vessel, Captain Napier, gallantly kept close to the enemy, and maintained a constant fire, in the hope of retarding their speed by damaging their masts and rigging.

The chase continued from the night of the fourteenth till the morning of the seventeenth. The Neptune, being a sluggish sailer, was left behind in less than twenty-four hours. At two o'clock, on the morning of the seventeenth, two of the French ships separated from their consort, and, favoured by the darkness, got off undiscovered. At length, about half past three, a few leagues from Cape Roxo, in the island of Puerto Rico, the Castor came up with the D'Hautpoult of seventy-four guns, and began a smart cannonade. In about half an hour the Pompée joined, and brought the enemy to close action, which continued for an hour and a quarter. Being at last nearly reduced to a wreck in her rigging and masts, entirely unmanageable, and having between eighty and ninety killed and wounded, the D'Hautpoult hauled down her colours. The loss of the Pompée was nine killed and thirty wounded.

The frigates, which were both laden with flour, succeeded in reaching Basseterre, in Gua-

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daloupe, notwithstanding the Intrepid made every exertion to cut off their retreat. One of them, however, at a subsequent period, fell into the hands of the British. This was La Furieuse, a frigate of the largest class, being pierced for forty-eight guns, but carrying only twenty at the time of her capture. She sailed from Guadaloupe for France, in the month of June, partly laden with coffee and sugar. Though she had not her full complement of guns, she was amply provided with other means of defence, having on board a full proportion of officers, two hundred men, and forty soldiers at small arms, besides a detachment of the sixty-sixth regiment of the line. On the fifth of July, just as La Furieuse was taking possession of an English merchantman, she was descried by Captain Mouncey, in the Bonne Citoyenne sloop, Notwithstanding her superior size and strength, Captain Mouncey did not hesitate to offer battle, which, however, La Furieuse declined to accept. After a chase of eighteen hours, he came up with her, and a desperate action began, which continued for six hours and fifty minutes. His powder being at last nearly expended, Captain Mouncey was preparing to board with all hands, when the French officer hailed to tell him that he had struck his colours. La Furieuse, at the time of her surrender, was reduced almost to a wreck, her masts were on the point of falling, she had five feet water in her

hold, which was rapidly encreasing, and no less than seventy-one of her crew were slain or wounded. The Bonne Citoyenne was in a shattered state, but her loss was only one killed and four wounded, a circumstance which can alone be accounted for by the lowness of her hull, and her being so close to the enemy's guns, that their fire went over her without producing any effect.

In St. Domingo the French still held the city of Santo Domingo, the capital of the Spanish part of the island. The Spaniards, however, had kept them invested, though with a very inefficient kind of blockade, since the autumn of the preceding year. Various actions had taken place between the two parties, with various success; but it did not appear that the besiegers were strong enough, without assistance, to compel the French to surrender the city. The British navy maintained a watchful guard to prevent the enemy from receiving succours; but, as this was found not to be a sufficient aid to the Spaniards, it was resolved to join them with a military force. Lieutenant-general Carmichael was accordingly dispatched from Jamaica, with about fourteen hundred troops, and on the 28th of June he landed at Palinqui, about thirty miles from Santo Domingo. Some of the ship's guns were also put on shore, to serve as a battering

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train, in case it should be necessary to undertake a siege.

Having reconnoitred the fortifications, the British general conceived it to be practicable to carry them by storm; a step which he determined to take, as being likely to occasion less loss to his army than it must inevitably suffer from carrying on the operations of a siege during the rainy season. The French, however, were now so much reduced by the straitness of the blockade, and so dispirited by the presence of the British, that they began to think of capitulating. The first conferences were broken off, in consequence of the terms proposed by the allies being refused by the garrison; and every thing was, therefore, got in readiness for the assault by the British general; but, on further consideration, the governor did not deem it prudent to hazard a contest, which might be fatal to his troops, and the result of which, even should it prove favourable to him, could not enable him to protract his resistance for a much longer period. The capitulation was accordingly signed, on the sixth of July, and the French troops, to the number of twelve hundred men, laid down their arms as prisoners of war.

This event closed the military but not the naval proceedings of the year. Fraught as our naval annals are with gallant deeds, they do not record a deed more gallant than that which is

now to be related. On the morning of the 13th of December, Captain Shortland, in the Junon of forty-four guns, and two hundred men, fell in, about a hundred and fifty miles to windward of Guadaloupe, with four sail, which showed Spanish colours, and answered all the Spanish private signals so correctly, that the captain of the Junon stood towards them, with the hope of obtaining some information respecting a French vessel, of which he was then in quest. They were, however, La Renommée, of forty-eight guns and three hundred men, commanded by M. Roquebert, La Clorinde, of the same force, and La Seine and La Loire, of equal size, but carrying only twenty guns each, they having been fitted up for the conveyance of four hundred soldiers, with military stores and provisions, for the supply of Guadaloupe.

It was not till Captain Shortland was within pistol-shot, that he suspected them to be enemies, and gave orders to put the ship about. At that instant they hoisted French colours, and poured in a broadside, which killed the man at the helm. The death of this man deprived the British of the power of retreating;—for his successor, misunderstanding the directions which were given to him, took a wrong course, so that the Junon, instead of running between the two headmost frigates, sheered on board one of them, and was immediately closed by the other, on the opposite

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side. La Seine then passed her bowsprit over the Junon's starboard quarter, and La Loire did the same on the larboard. She was thus completely hemmed in by her opponents.

Notwithstanding the immense disparity of strength, Captain Shortland resolved to try what could be done by courage, and at all events to sell the Junon as dearly as possible. From the great number of soldiers in the French ships, they were enabled to keep up a destructive fire of small arms, in addition to that of their artillery. This was so galling, that the British captain called up the boarders and marines, with an intention of boarding the enemy; but the latter, being aware of his purpose, directed a general volley of grape and musketry among them, which killed Lieutenant Græme their leader, and so many of the men that it was no longer possible to endeavour to act on the offensive. The French now, in their turn, made several efforts to board, but were as often beaten back; many of them falling by the pike of Captain Shortland, as they were on the point of entering the ship. He had already received several wounds, and he was at length thrown senseless on the deck by a langridge-shot, so that the command devolved upon Lieutenant Deckar. No less brave than his fallen superior, the lieutenant persevered in the contest, and several times repulsed the enemy, till he himself being thrown down by a splinter, and

not a man being left upon the deck, the French rushed in, and the Junon became their prize. This unequal conflict was sustained by the British for an hour and a quarter. Their loss in killed and wounded was ninety men. Among those who died was their intrepid captain, who, covered with wounds, no part of him except his head remaining unhurt, expired on the 21st of January, 1810, after having suffered six weeks of excruciating pain.

The Junon was reduced so entirely to a wreck, that the enemy were under the necessity of burning her, on the morning subsequent to the capture. Her colours had been shot away during the engagement, and at the time she was consuming the English pendant was still flying at her mast-head.

The stubborn resistance of the Junon was fatal to a part of the victorious squadron. The Observateur, a small sloop, which was in company with the Junon when they fell in with the French, escaped unpursued, because, according to the confession of the enemy, "they could not spare a frigate to follow her." She reached Fort Royal bay on the sixteenth, and made known to Admiral Cochrane the arrival of the hostile ships. The most strenuous exertions were instantly made, to proceed in search of the enemy. The search was, in part, successful. After the capture of the Junon, the captors

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separated, and two of them, La Loire and La Seine, arrived off the coast of Guadaloupe, on the 18th of December, just in time to be seen by a small squadron, under Captain Ballard, which had been sent forward by Admiral Cochrane, while the rest of the ships were collecting. Cut off from every other retreat, the two French frigates ran into Ance la Barque, a few miles to the north-west of Basseterre. There, however, they thought themselves secure, under the protection of several batteries, by which the shore was lined.

The Blonde, the Thetis, Cygnet, Ringdove and Hazard, now bore down upon the enemy, who were moored with their broadsides to the entrance of the bay, and busy in landing the troops with which they were crowded. The brunt of the battle was sustained by the Blonde and the Thetis. In the mean while, the boats of the squadron, led by Captain Cameron of the Hazard, were ordered to attack the batteries. One of the frigates was speedily dismasted, and, soon after, the sailors deserted them both, and set them on fire. Captain Cameron, in the mean time had made good his landing, notwithstanding a strenuous resistance from his numerous opponents. He then stormed the whole of the batteries, and thus silenced the heavy cannonade which, in addition to a hot fire of musketry, they were keeping up against the British squadron.

Unfortunately, however, this brave officer was slain by a swivel shot, at the very moment when he had completed his conquest. The frigates were consumed with all their freight of stores and provisions, the French having been able to save nothing but the clothes which they wore. The batteries were entirely demolished, and the magazines were blown up. Before the close of the action, Admiral Cochrane came up, but the light and baffling winds prevented his ship from getting within gun-shot till the business of the day was effectually done.

During this month, the British cruizers were no less fortunate than vigilant in harassing the enemy, and preventing succour from being thrown into the colony of Guadaloupe. On the 13th, the day on which the Junon was taken, a difficult service was gallantly performed by a party consisting of the marines and seventy-five seamen of the Thetis, Pultusk, Achates and Bacchus, headed by Captain Elliot of the Pultusk. The Nisus corvette, which had brought a supply of provisions from France, was at anchor in the port of the Hayes; where, however, the British were resolved that she should not long remain. As the readiest means of obtaining possession of her, they determined to land, and carry the batteries by which she was protected. To approach those batteries the assailants had to pass, without a guide, over a steep hill, and through thick and

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trackless woods. At night-fall, nevertheless, they reached the fort, which was garrisoned by three hundred men, and they instantly assaulted it with such resolution, that, after a brief contest, the French took flight. The guns were now turned against the corvette, upon which she hauled down her colours. Previously to their quitting the shore, the victors demolished the battery, set fire to the buildings, spiked the cannon, and threw over the cliff the gun-carriages and ammunition, so as to leave the port without any means of affording shelter, or resisting an attack.

On the succeeding day, the Melampus captured La Bearnais corvette of sixteen guns, with a cargo of flour and warlike stores for Guadaloupe; and, on the seventeenth, La Papillon, of the same force, and with the same kind of lading, was taken by the Rosamond. These captures, by which the resources of the enemy were considerably diminished, were the closing events of the year.

There was now only one blow which could be struck at France in this quarter of the world. Guadaloupe was the sole transatlantic possession which she yet retained, and that she was destined to lose in the campaign of 1810. The force to which the reduction of Guadaloupe was committed consisted of six thousand men. It was formed into two divisions and a reserve, the divisions led by Major-general Hislop and Brigadier-

general Harcourt, the reserve by Brigadier-general Wale, the whole being under the orders of Lieutenant-general Beckwith. Three thousand five hundred men, commanded by General Ernouf, composed the force by which Guadaloupe was to be defended against the British army.

The troops were begun to be collected early in January from the several islands, and all the arrangements being completed by the twenty-second of the month, the general and admiral sailed from Martinico, for the appointed place of rendezvous, in Prince Rupert's bay, Dominica, where, on their arrival, they had the satisfaction to find that the whole of the armament was safely assembled. The second division was then ordered to proceed to the Saints, to prepare for disembarking near Basseterre, while the first division and the reserve steered their course to the north-east quarter of that part of Guadaloupe which bears the name of Cabesterre.

The first division and the reserve were landed, in the morning of the twenty-eighth, near the village of St. Mary's, without any opposition. The division moved forward to the town of Cabesterre and Grand Riviere, on the same evening, the reserve remaining behind till the next morning, to cover the landing of provisions and stores. In order to draw off the attention of the enemy, the second division was directed to make a feint of disembarking at Trois Rivieres. This was

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done on the following day, and it produced the desired effect; the enemy abandoning several of their positions in the fear of their retreat being cut off. Having accomplished this service, the ships with the second division continued their route to the western side of the island, and landed the troops about three leagues to the north of Basseterre.

As the divisions advanced, the French general drew back, successively relinquishing several strong positions, without venturing to offer any resistance. The posts of Palmiste, Trois-Rivieres, Langlais and Morne Houel were in the hands of the invaders by the second of February. Basseterre, which was also abandoned by the French, sent deputies to request protection for persons and property; a request which was granted by the British admiral, who forebore to fire upon the forts, in the fear of injuring the inhabitants of the town. The whole district of Grande Terre had from the first been left defenceless, every man that General Ernouf could muster having been drawn together, to swell his force in the southern half of the colony.

Hemmed in, at the extremity of the island, between the sea and the British army, Ernouf was now to make his last stand. He had judiciously chosen his position, which was naturally strong, and which he had strengthened by all the artificial means in his power. He was posted

on heights, his left supported by the mountains of Matouba, and every accessible point of his line covered by abbatis and stockaded redoubts. In his front was a river, the passage of which, exceedingly difficult in itself, was rendered much more so, by a detachment of troops, stationed behind an abbatis. The ground also, between the river and the heights, was bushy and full of rugged rocks, and of course highly unfavourable to the march of the assailants.

It was on the third of February that the British troops were put in motion to dislodge him from his advantageous position. Brigadier-generals Hislop and Harcourt were charged with the operations on the right. The principal attack, however, was to be made upon the left of the enemy, the task of turning which was entrusted to Brigadier-general Wale, with the reserve. On the right the British fully succeeded in driving back the French, and establishing themselves in advance of their former ground. The more arduous movements on the left were attended with still more decisive success. The passage of the river was gallantly forced, under a heavy fire of musketry. The column proceeded about a hundred yards through the bushy and rocky space at the foot of the hill, and then the front companies branched off into three columns, which rapidly ascended the heights; the leading companies reserving their fire, the remainder, as they

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followed the van, firing upon the enemy from their flanks. Near the summit of the height the ascent became more difficult, and here five hundred of the French poured down upon them a destructive volley. The van, nevertheless, led by Major Henderson, resolutely pursued its course, and did not return a single shot till it was within twenty-five yards of the foe. It then closed with the French, and was speedily supported by the rest of the regiments. The result was the total rout of this wing of the enemy, which was driven at the point of the bayonet from all its stockaded redoubts and other defences. In less than half an hour after the British had passed the river, General Ernouf found that his left flank was turned, the heights were occupied, and his post, lately formidable, was now become one of extreme peril. Our loss was four officers killed, and about eighty men slain or wounded. That of the vanquished was considerably greater.

The situation of General Ernouf was indeed become so critical, that he lost no time in hoisting flags of truce, in all the works which he still retained. The advance of the British was, of course, suspended, and a pause took place at the batteries, the fire of which was just on the point of being opened. The capitulation was signed on the fifth, the French marching out with military honours, and becoming prisoners of war. Eight days sufficed for the reduction of Guada-

loupe, in the accomplishing of which our total loss was not more than fifty slain, and two hundred and fifty wounded. CHAP. LX. 1810.

The capitulation by which Guadaloupe was given to the British, included also the French part of the island of St. Martin's. A small squadron, with a division of troops, under Brigadier-general Harcourt, was dispatched to take possession of this part, and to reduce that which was held by the Dutch, should the temerity of the governor render it necessary to resort to arms. This was completed by the 16th of February, without the British having been compelled to adopt compulsory measures. The governor at first accepted the terms which had been granted to Guadaloupe; but, influenced by one strange caprice, he subsequently retracted his consent, and chose rather to surrender the colony, without any terms, to the discretion of the conquerors.

The last hostile flag which waved in the western hemisphere was struck on the 22d of February, when the two small Dutch islands of St. Eustatia and Saba were given up to a British detachment. From that period, till the treaty of Paris, in 1814, the war as far as regarded this quarter of the globe, could no longer be said to exist. The supervening contest with America did not affect the colonies other than in a commercial and pecuniary point of view.

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Gigantic struggles were still to be made in Europe, seas of blood were yet to be shed in that devoted region, and terrible alternations of hope and fear, of victory and defeat, were to be experienced there by the contending parties; but the flames of war were extinct in the western colonies, which after eighteen years of almost incessant hostility, at length enjoyed the blessing of being no longer the theatre of military operations.

One transient exception to this did indeed occur. On the return of Napoleon from Elba, in 1815, the colony of Guadaloupe deserted the party of the Bourbons, and ranged itself on the side of the reinstated emperor. Five thousand British troops, commanded by Sir John Leith, were, however, landed in Guadaloupe, on the tenth of August, and the colony was once more reduced to submission, after a brief and feeble resistance from the French force, under Count de Linois and Baron Boyer.

The cessions which England obtained in the western hemisphere at the close of this war, were superior to those which she acquired at the treaty of Amiens. From France she received Tobago and St. Lucia; from Holland the rising colonies of Demerara, Essequibo and Berbice. It would not, however, be correct to estimate her gains by the mere extent of her colonial acquisitions. The struggle, in this instance, was not for a doubtful

right, an idle punctilio, a barren scrap of territory; it was for honour, and even for existence. In the attainment of her object, it cannot be denied that England was eminently successful. She long supported the war single-handed against accumulated enemies; she at length rallied all the nations of Europe around her; she raised her military renown to the highest pitch; and she not barely came victorious out of the conflict, but she likewise beat down, dethroned, and placed in bondage, her potent adversary, planted her standards once more on the towers of Paris, and finally dictated at the point of the sword the terms of the treaty which she granted to her vanquished rival. The price at which this triumph has been bought, excessive as it undoubtedly is, and severely as the privations and miseries produced by it are felt, it would be useless to lament. It is to be hoped that a lengthened period of peace, a wise and nursing care of those resources which may be found in the spirit, industry, and talent of the people, and a rigid economy on the part of the government, will enable the country to recover from that state of languor into which it has fallen, and which, in empires as in individuals, is the certain consequence of efforts unnaturally violent, and too protracted in their duration.

DESCRIPTION

OF

BRITISH COLONIES.

DESCRIPTION

OF

BRITISH COLONIES,

WHICH WERE OMITTED BY MR. EDWARDS, OR HAVE BEEN CEDED TO THIS COUNTRY SINCE HIS DECEASE.

Anguilla, the Bahamas, Barbuda, the Bermudas, Demerara, Essequibo and Berbice, Honduras, St. Lucia, Tobago, Trinidad.

In his description of the British possessions in the West Indies, such as they were at the period when he wrote, some of the minor colonies were omitted by Mr. Edwards, in consequence of the scanty portion of information which he was able to obtain on the subject; and others shared the same fate, because it did not appear to him that they were of sufficient magnitude and value to be deserving of attention. Since the publication of his work, the two treaties, which closed the wars narrated in the preceding pages, have likewise made large additions to the British colonial dominions. This chapter, therefore, will be devoted to giving a succinct account of the colonies which were left undescribed by Mr. Edwards,

and also of those, still more valuable, which this country has acquired by cession from her recent enemies. As these fractions of territory lie widely scattered, on the continent, and in the islands, they will be brought before the reader, not arranged according to any artificial classification, which would be of no utility whatever, but merely in their alphabetical order. First, then, in place, though nearly the last in importance, is the little island of

ANGUILLA,

or Snake Island, so named from its tortuous form. This island, which is separated from that of St. Martin's by a narrow channel, is situated about fifteen leagues to the north-west of St. Christopher's, between the 18th and 19th degrees of north latitude, and the 62d and 63d degrees of west longitude. Its length is from nine to ten leagues, and its greatest breadth not more than three.

The soil is entirely chalk, and there are neither mountains nor rivers. The climate is extremely healthy, and the people are consequently strong and vigorous. In the centre of the island is a salt lake, the salt produced from which is exported to the New England states. On the coast are only two harbours, and even they are not accessible to large vessels.

Anguilla was settled by the English in the year 1650. The productions raised by the first settlers were cotton, millet seed, and potatoes. In process of time, and by dint of labour, the inhabitants succeeded in introducing the sugar-cane, which is still cultivated, but not to any great extent. Their chief profit arises from the rearing of cattle and the raising of Indian corn, but particularly the former. In the year 1787, Anguilla employed two vessels, and its exports, among which was 2,130 cwt. of sugar, amounted in value to 13,000 pounds.

The number of inhabitants is said to be about two hundred freemen, and five hundred slaves. The island has, however, an assembly of its own, and even a chief, who is always chosen by the islanders, though he is confirmed in his office by the governor of Antigua. The colonists are animated by a spirit of independence, which would prompt them to yield with reluctance to any authority which was not derived from themselves.

Diminutive as it is, Anguilla has not entirely escaped the scourge of war. At an early period it was occasionally annoyed by the transient incursions of the French; but, in 1746, they made a more serious attack upon it. They landed six hundred men, but the Anguillans, though they could not at that period muster more than a hundred men in arms, resisted the invaders with such determined bravery, that they slew a hundred

and fifty of them, and compelled the rest to a hasty retreat. From that time till 1796 Anguilla remained unmolested. The result of the brutal enterprise which Victor Hugues then undertook against it, has already been narrated, in the sixth chapter of the History of the War.

THE BAHAMAS.

The chain of islands which bears the name of the Bahamas, or Lucayas, is of vast extent. It stretches, in a diagonal direction, from off the northern side of St. Domingo, in latitude twenty-one and a half, to the coast of East Florida, in latitude twenty-seven and a half, and is composed of almost innumerable rocks, islets, called keys, and islands, of which not more than twelve or fourteen are inhabited. In the returns last made to the government, the settled islands, which are here arranged according to the magnitude of their population, are stated to be, New Providence, Turk's islands, Eleuthera, Exuma and its keys, Harbour Island and keys adjacent, Crooked Island, Long Island, St. Salvador, the Caicos, Watling's Island, Rum Key, and Heneagua. Some of the largest of the Bahamas, as the Great Bahama and Lucaya, remain without inhabitants. The island of St. Salvador, or as it was called by the Indians, Guanahani, is remarkable as being the first land that was fallen

in with by Columbus, on his memorable voyage. It was on the eleventh of October, 1492, that he came in sight of what he might consider as the advanced post of the new world.

When the Bahamas were discovered, they were peopled by a numerous, mild and happy race of Indians. No long time, however, elapsed before this harmless race was entirely destroyed. By the basest arts, the Spaniards seduced great numbers of them to Hispaniola, where they employed some of them to work the mines, while they sent the rest of them farther south, to act as divers in the pearl fishery of Cumana. Others were wrested from their country by force. No less than forty thousand were thus devoted to death. All that now remains to tell that this unfortunate people once existed, is the record of history, and some of their stone hatchets and domestic utensils, which are occasionally found.

From this period till about the year 1629, the islands were entirely devoid of inhabitants. New Providence was then settled by the English, who held it till 1641, when they were attacked and expelled by the Spaniards; who, however, made no attempt to settle there themselves. They contented themselves with burning the habitations, driving out the settlers, and murdering the governor, with circumstances of the most wanton cruelty. It was again re-colonized

by the British, in 1666, and continued in their hands till 1703, when a formidable combined force of French and Spaniards effected a landing, carried off the negroes, destroyed Nassau, and drove into the woods the inhabitants, the most of whom, on the invaders having departed, retired to Carolina. Those who stayed behind were rendered desperate by their recent sufferings and losses. It now became a rendezvous for pirates, who were soon notorious and dreaded for their desperate spirit, and who committed such depredations in the West Indian seas, that government at length determined to suppress them, and to resettle the colony. Captain Woodes Rogers, well known as a skilful and intrepid officer, who had circumnavigated the globe, was accordingly appointed governor, in 1718; and by his exertions, and those of the navy, the object was ultimately accomplished, some of the pirates being slain, and the rest reduced to obedience. Shortly after this, settlements began to be formed on some of the other islands. In the year 1740, Mr. Bruce was sent out, as engineer, to fortify the town and harbour of Nassau.

The Bahamas remained quiet till the commencement of the American war. In the beginning of March 1776, Commodore Hopkins, with a small squadron from Philadelphia, took possession of New Providence, but immediately abandoned it, carrying off with him the governor.

The island was again reduced, in 1781, by a stronger enemy. The invading force this time consisted of 1500 Spaniards under Don Galvez. The whole of the Bahamas were included in this capitulation.

By the treaty of peace, in 1783, it was stipulated that these islands should be once more restored to the British crown. Before the treaty was signed they had, however, ceased to be under subjection to the enemy. The enterprise by which they were recovered has a character of romantic daring, that entitles it to particular notice. It was carried into execution by Colonel Deveaux, an officer of South Carolina, barely twenty-five years of age, who had greatly distinguished himself by his zeal, activity and courage in the royal cause. The resolution of the House of Commons, to discontinue the contest on the North American continent, having deprived Colonel Deveaux of all further opportunity to display his talents in his native country, he sought the means of making himself useful against our foreign enemies. He first planned an expedition against Pensacola; but this he was induced, probably by the scantiness of his means, to relinquish; and he then resolved to attempt the recapture of New Providence, which was garrisoned by nearly seven hundred Spanish troops. To procure resources for this attempt he devoted

the remains of his broken fortune, and all that his credit would enable him to raise.

With his utmost exertions he was able to get together no more than sixty-five volunteers, with whom he embarked in two small brigantines, and sailed for Harbour Island, where and at Eleuthera, he obtained a few recruits, principally negroes. His whole strength, however, never exceeded two hundred and twenty men, of whom only a hundred and fifty were provided with muskets. With this diminutive force he landed, on the night of the 14th of May, to the east of Fort Montague, which guards the entrance of the harbour. Fortunately, the garrison was in such a state of fancied security, that, when he reached the ramparts at the head of his party, only a single centinel was awake. Having secured this man, who seized a lighted match and endeavoured to blow up the fort, Colonel Deveaux speedily made himself master of it, together with three large armed gallies.

The colonel now took up a position on a ridge opposite to the works which covered the town, and he erected batteries on two commanding hills. As it was of the greatest importance to keep the enemy ignorant of his numbers, he had recourse to various artifices to effect this desirable object. Boats were continually rowed from the vessels, filled with men, who pretended to land,

then concealed themselves, went back, and returned in the same manner. Even men of straw were dressed out and disposed upon the heights, and some of the troops were painted and habited as Indians, to excite the terrors of the Spaniards. The town was next peremptorily summoned, and, as the governor hesitated, the message was seconded by a volley of shot from the batteries, which soon brought him to a decision. He capitulated, on condition that the garrison should be sent to the Havannah, a condition which was willingly granted. When the Spaniards marched out, they could not forbear from expressing the surprise and shame which they felt, as they surveyed the scanty numbers and the grotesque and ill provided appearance of the motley band to which they had laid down their arms.

The close of the American war brought a large addition of population to the Bahamas. Many of the unfortunate royalists, who were compelled to abandon their country, transferred the remains of their property to those islands. Since that period the number of the people, and the cultivation of the land, have progressively increased. To encourage commerce, Nassau was, under certain regulations, declared a free port in the year 1787, and in the year 1792 this privilege was made perpetual. By the last returns, taken in 1810, it appears that the total number of inhabitants in the Bahamas was

16,718, of whom nearly one-fourth were whites, and the rest free people of colour and slaves, the proportion of slaves being about eleven out of seventeen parts.

From the wide extent which the Bahamas occupy, it might be supposed that a considerable difference would be found in their geological structure. This, however, is not the case. "They rise," says Mr. M'Kinnen, who is the latest and fullest writer on the subject, "almost perpendicularly from an immense depth of water, and seem to have been formed, if external appearances may be trusted, from an accumulation of shells or small calcareous grains of sand. The land generally seems low, and its surface and figure throughout the islands is very nearly the same. At the utmost depths to which the inhabitants have penetrated, nothing has been found but calcareous rock, and sometimes an intermixture of shells. At a small distance from the shores a reef of rocks in many of the islands is observed to follow the direction of the land, and form the boundary of the soundings: without this rampart the ocean is often immediately unfathomable; within it, the bottom is either of a beautiful white sand, or checkered with heads (as they are termed) of rocks covered with sea weed." The calcareous rock is covered by a light soil, which is frequently but of small depth. The climate is healthy. Of rivers and streams there

are none, but water is easily obtained by digging wells.

Cotton, salt, mahogany, dying woods, turtle, and various sorts of fruit, are the chief exportable produce of these islands. The cotton, which is one of the principal articles of export, yields largely, but the crops are frequently destroyed by those destructive insects the chenille and the red bug, the latter of which stains the cotton in such a manner as to render it of little or no value. Salt may be procured in several of the islands. It is, however, from the small group called the Turk's Islands that nearly the whole of it is obtained. They are annually visited by the salt-rakers, to the number of between one and two thousand, who begin their operations in the month of February. The maritime part of the inhabitants of the Bahamas also derive considerable profit from following the business of wreckers, which consists in giving assistance to those who are wrecked, or in danger of being so, upon the almost endless rocks and shoals by which these islands are surrounded. This occupation employs an amazing number of vessels; no less than forty sail having been watching at one time off the Florida shore.

The town of Nassau, in New Providence, is the centre of trade, and the seat of government. The harbour is nearly land-locked, and the body of the town stands on the southern side of it, and

extends over a pretty steep acclivity, to the summit of a ridge, the west of which is crowned by a fortress of considerable strength, and the barracks for the troops. Nassau is divided into two parishes, each of which has a church and a rector. The ministers of both parishes are liberally provided for. The appearance of the place is lively, the streets are regularly laid out, and the public buildings are respectable. The streets in some parts are remarkable for their smoothness, the pavement, if so it may be called, being the surface of the solid rock. Stone was formerly brought from the Bermudas, for the construction of the houses, but this trouble is now avoided, it being found that the stone on the spot is proper for every architectural purpose. An agricultural society was, some years ago, established here, under the patronage of the legislature, and it has pursued its inquiries with a laudable zeal. The principal trade of Nassau is carried on with England, the southern islands in the West Indies, and the American States. The commercial prosperity of the town, and, indeed of all the colony, has of late years rapidly increased. In the Bahamas there are four regular ports of entry, which are at Nassau, at Great Exuma, at the Caicos, and at the Turk's Islands. In the year 1810, the imports were £108,000, and the exports were little short of half a million.

Like the constitution of all the West Indian

colonies, the constitution of the Bahamas is closely modelled on that of the parent country. The principal executive authority is in the governor, who is also commander-in-chief of the militia, and has the power of summoning and dissolving the legislative body, and of putting a negative on its proceedings. He likewise, in his judicial capacity, presides in the court of chancery and the court of errors. His annual income, including colonial perquisites, such as licenses on vessels, and a salvage on wrecked property, is somewhat less than three thousand pounds.

Filling in a manner the situation of the British Peers is the Council, which is composed of twelve members. They are appointed by the crown, and, when a vacancy happens, it is usually filled up at the recommendation of the governor.

The House of Assembly, or Commons, consists of members returned by the several islands. The number is between twenty and thirty. To become a representative, it is necessary that the candidate should possess two hundred acres of cultivated land, or property to the value of two thousand pounds currency. The electors are all free white persons, who have attained the age of twenty-one, and have resided twelve months within the government, for six of which months they must have been householders or freeholders, or, in default of that, must have paid duties to the amount of fifty pounds. From

two or three recent instances, particularly from a case of privilege, in which the governor was held to have exceeded his powers, it appears that this assembly is neither deficient in knowledge to understand its own rights, nor in vigour to assert them when encroached upon.

Besides the courts of chancery and error there are other courts. The principal of these is the supreme court, which holds its sessions in terms of three weeks. The terms are fixed at stated periods in the months of January, April and July. It exercises the combined powers of the courts of common law at Westminster, and its practice is modelled on that of the King's Bench. When the value of the property in dispute exceeds three hundred pounds, the sentence may be revised by the court of errors, and when it passes five hundred, the cause may be carried before the king in council. The salary of the chief justice is £500 from the crown; and he likewise receives a colonial compensation of as much in currency, and about £400 from the perquisites of office. The two subordinate judges have each an annual stipend of £200 from the crown, and £250 from the colonial government. The whole remuneration of the attorney general is about £500. There is an inferior court of common pleas, held every three months at Nassau, which decides on suits under twenty pounds; but whose decision may be appealed from to the

superior tribunal. At Nassau there is also a vice admiralty court.

That the inhabitants of the Bahamas have none of that attachment to the natal soil, which is so strong in the people of most other countries, may be gathered from a report which was drawn up at the close of 1815, by a committee of the House of Assembly. "The colonial attachments of the Bahamas," say the committee, are almost purely political; having little or no connection either with any partial prejudices in favour of the soil, or any solid or immoveable local interest. The inhabitants, for instance, possess no expensive sugar-works, or other manufactories. In the town of Nassau alone are to be found buildings of any value. From the necessity which the planters are under of frequently shifting their residence from one tract to another, even their dwelling-houses are but negro-huts upon a larger scale; composed of the same materials, and built and finished, and sometimes even furnished by the hands of the same rude artists. Should, therefore, his political attachments ever become shaken, the planter might remove, with as light a heart, and as little personal inconvenience, to a foreign island, as to one within the limits of the same government. Nor, from the singular intricacy of the navigation of these numerous islands, and circumjacent banks and keys, would it be an easy task to intercept him on his retreat."

BARBUDA.

This island is situated between the seventeenth and eighteenth degrees of north latitude, and the sixty-first and second degrees of west longitude, about twelve leagues north of Antigua. It is twenty miles in length and ten in breadth, and the inhabitants are somewhat more than fifteen hundred in number. The coast is dangerous, but there is a good road for shipping. The interior is level, and the soil fertile; so much so, that the chief or only trade of the colonists consists in the sale of cattle, swine, horses, mules, corn, and other provisions, to the neighbouring islands. Turtle are to be found on the shore; and the woods contain deer, and several kinds of game. The air is of such purity that invalids from other parts of the West Indies used to resort hither, for the purpose of recovering their health. Barbuda was first settled by a party of colonists from St. Christopher's, led by Sir Thomas Warner. The settlers, however, were so greatly harassed, by the Charaibs of Dominica, that they were compelled to desert the colony. But the strength of the savages being ere long much diminished, the English once more returned, and remained, thenceforth, without molestation. The whole of the island is the property of the Codrington family, to whom it is said to produce an annual income of five thousand pounds.

THE BERMUDAS.

The Bermudas, or Sommers' Islands, "the still vext Bermoothes" of our great dramatist, are situated between the thirty-first and thirty-second degrees of north latitude, and the sixty-fourth and sixty fifth degrees of west longitude. Their first name, pronounced Bermoodas by the inhabitants, they derive from their asserted original discoverer, John Bermudez, a Spaniard, who touched upon them, in 1522, and found them destitute of inhabitants; their second and less used appellation they take from Sir George Sommers, who was wrecked upon them in 1609, and made his way back to Virginia, in a cedar vessel, constructed by his men, which did not contain a single ounce of iron, except one bolt in the keel. It is, however, disputed that Bermudez was their earliest visitant, that honour being claimed for May, an Englishman, who was certainly wrecked on them. He and his companions built a vessel, and returned to England, where they published an account of their adventure. The cluster of islands is said to be four hundred in number, the far largest portion of which, however, are nothing more than uninhabitable rocks. The whole of the inhabitable part contains little more than twelve thousand acres. The form of this group is that of a crook, the bend being formed by the west end of St. George's Island, and the islands

of Somerset, Gates and Ireland. All the northern side is singularly indented with bays and sounds; the southern side, which presents a convexity to the ocean, is, on the contrary, very little broken, and the coast is so bold that, in many places, the largest ships may stand in close to the shore. The nearest land is Cape Hatteras, in Carolina, which is distant about two hundred leagues.

The Bermudas were settled shortly after the shipwreck of Sir George Sommers. On his return to Virginia, which colony was then exceedingly distressed by famine, he gave such an account of the abundance of large black hogs, and other articles of provision, that might be obtained in the Bermudas, that Lord Delaware, the governor of the colony, dispatched him back, for the purpose of obtaining a supply. Sir George died on his arrival in the Bermudas, and, though he charged them to carry his orders into effect, the crew of his vessel, the same vessel that was built after the shipwreck, chose rather to proceed to England, than to revisit Virginia. Two sailors had remained behind since the time of the wreck, and they were now joined by another, who came over with Sir George Sommers on his second voyage, and who allowed his companions to depart without him. Though there were only three men left on the island, two of them, one of whom was the new comer, quarrelled for the

sovereignty of it, and would have destroyed each other, had they not been prevented by their wiser comrade. After their reconciliation, they found, in one of their rambles along the shore, a piece of ambergris, which weighed eighty pounds; and, as this treasure was of no use to them in their present situation, they formed the wild scheme of sailing in an open boat to Virginia or Newfoundland, in order to dispose of it.

In the meanwhile, however, the Virginia company, who had received a favourable report of the islands, laid claim to them as first discoverers, and sold their right to a hundred and twenty persons, who, in 1612, obtained a charter from King James, and, fitting out a ship, dispatched Mr. Moor with sixty settlers. Mr. Moor found the three sailors preparing to depart with their prize, which he seized and sold, for the benefit of the company. The new adventurers settled upon St. George's Island, and Moor was indefatigable in planting and fortifying the colony. A second band of settlers, with supplies, arrived in the course of the same year, and the town of St. George was then planned out. The Spaniards were soon jealous of this infant establishment, and came with several vessels to attack it, but being vigorously fired at by the forts, they sheered off; a fortunate circumstance, as the colonists were scarcely in possession of a single barrel of powder. Another enemy was not so

easily conquered as the Spaniards. These were rats, which had come on shore from the British ships, and which multiplied to such a degree that they covered the ground, made nests even in the trees, devoured all the fruit and corn on St. George's Island, both within and without doors, and then swam over to the neighbouring islands, where they committed the same ravages. This annoyance lasted five years, and at length suddenly ceased.

Mr. Moor was succeeded in the government by Captain Tucker, who followed up with spirit all his predecessor's schemes of improvement, and particularly encouraged the cultivation of tobacco. But the most remarkable circumstance, which happened during his government, arose from his being so rigid a disciplinarian, that five of his men resolved to hazard their lives rather than remain under his controul. In pursuance of this resolution they built a boat, which was little better than an open one, stored it with necessaries, and putting to sea, reached Cork in Ireland in forty-two days, notwithstanding they encountered storms, suffered severe hardships, and were brutally plundered by a French privateer.

Captain Butler succeeded Captain Tucker in 1619. The islands had by this time gained such a reputation in England for beauty, richness and salubrity, that the planting of them was highly encouraged; many of the first nobility having

purchased plantations. With Captain Butler went no less than five hundred persons to join the settlers. The number of white inhabitants was by this means swelled to a thousand. Hitherto the island had been ruled by the governor and council alone; but it was thus become so populous that Captain Butler deemed it expedient to introduce a House of Assembly, and to frame a body of laws according to the English mode. By the colonists a monument was now erected to the memory of Sir George Sommers. The prosperity of the Bermudas continued on the increase for many years. The civil wars did not a little contribute to this prosperity, as many persons of opulence and character took shelter here, from the distractions of their native country. Among those who visited the Bermudas was the poet Waller, who, in an elegant poem, has depicted their beauties with vivid colours. At that period there are said to have been three thousand English residing in the colony, and the total number of whites has been estimated, perhaps with considerable exaggeration, at no fewer than ten thousand.

From that time there is nothing in the scanty history of the Bermudas which claims our notice. The learned and benevolent Bishop Berkeley projected the foundation of a college in the colony, for the purpose of teaching and civilizing the Indian savages of the continent, but the scheme

was not carried into effect. The population has certainly declined, for it does not now much exceed four thousand whites. In the American war, numerous privateers were fitted out here, which were chiefly manned by negro slaves; and so attached were those slaves to their masters, that, when taken prisoners by the enemy, they always returned as soon as they could procure the means. Towards the close of the war, General Washington meditated the conquest of Bermuda, for the purpose, as it was emphatically explained, "of making it a nest of hornets, for the annoyance of the British trade in that part of the world." That, in hostile hands, it might easily be made so, there can be no doubt, as it lies conveniently in the track to the West Indian islands. In the late war with France, the Bermudas were the usual winter station for our naval force in the American seas, and though the entrance of the harbour is extremely narrow, yet seventy-four gun ships were carried through it in perfect safety.

The climate of the Bermudas is exceedingly salubrious, though some affirm that, since the diminution of the woods, it is less mild and genial than it once was. The general temperature is such that the islands seem to be the residence of perpetual spring; the fields and the trees being never divested of their verdure. Snow seldom falls, and the rains are not frequent, though heavy while they last. Storms, however,

are not uncommon, and are exceedingly violent, accompanied by thunder and lightning. These storms are much dreaded by the Americans, who term the space between Cape Hatteras and the Bermudas the Horse Latitudes, in consequence of their being often under the necessity of throwing overboard the horses, which they are carrying to the West-India islands and to Surinam.

The coasts, especially on the north side, are thickly studded with sunken rocks, which are plainly visible to the mariner. "The water," says an elegant writer, who resided for a while at Bermuda, "is so beautifully clear around the island, that the rocks are seen beneath to a very great depth, and as we entered the harbour, they appeared to us so near the surface, that it seemed impossible we should not strike on them. There is no necessity, of course, for heaving the lead, and the negro pilot, looking down at the rocks from the bow of the ship, takes her through this difficult navigation, with a skill and confidence which seem to astonish the oldest sailors." The openings into the harbours are narrow and shoaly, so that pilots as expert as those just mentioned are required to conduct a vessel through them. But that which renders the Bermudas most dangerous to navigators is the strong current, which, setting to the north-east out of the Gulph of Florida, often imperceptibly carries vessels many leagues to the eastward of their supposed

course. In 1722, the Spanish flotilla, of fifteen galleons, from the Havannah, was nearly lost on the western coast of St. George's Island, in consequence of the effect of this powerful current.

The surrounding seas are well stored with fish and turtle; and the Bermudians are among the most dexterous of fishermen, especially with the harpoon. Whales are sometimes caught, and ambergris is still found on the shores, though in smaller quantities than formerly.

The soil is fertile, and capable of producing every article of West-India produce. About two hundred acres are cultivated in cotton. Tame and wild fowl are plentiful, and the breed of black swine, though somewhat diminished, is yet numerous. The sloops and other vessels, which the colonists build of their cedar, and which are highly prized for their incorruptibility, sound workmanship, and swiftness in sailing, form one of the principal articles of Bermudian export. Another article is a beautiful species of white freestone, which is easily cut, and is in request for building the houses of gentlemen in the West Indies. Three or four hundred of the natives also go annually to Turk's Islands, to rake salt, which is exchanged with the Americans for provisions, or sold for cash on the spot.

The natives of the Bermudas are handsome, good-natured, lively, and hospitable to strangers. The character of the women is peculiarly ami-

able. Indolence is the great fault of the men; and this indolence it is which has prevented the colony from rising to that prosperous situation to which it might otherwise have attained. But, whatever may be the faults of the Bermudians, a disposition to tyrannize is not among the number. In no part of the western hemisphere does slavery appear in so mild a form; a striking proof of which has already been given.

The chief and indeed only large island is St. George's, which is about sixteen miles in length, and at most three in breadth. Though bearing but one name, it, in fact, consists of two islands, separated by a narrow passage. It is divided into nine tribes or parishes, and has as many churches, which are in charge of three clergymen. There is likewise a Presbyterian place of worship. The tribes of Devonshire and Southampton have each a library. Scattered houses and hamlets are numerous; the whole island being, in a manner, a continued village.

On the smallest of the two islands, which lies to the east, and on the shore, looking towards the south, is the town of St. George, which contains about five hundred houses, well built, of splendidly white stone, that rivals snow, and contrasts delightfully with the verdure of the surrounding cedars and pasture ground. It is supplied with milk, butter, poultry, fresh meat and vegetables, from the contiguous island of St.

David's. Its public buildings are an elegant church, a library, and a noble town-house, in the latter of which the two branches of the legislature assemble to hold their deliberations. Every accessible point, and no point is accessible without a pilot, is defended by forts, of which there are no less than nine, mounting seventy pieces of cannon. The situation of St. George's is eminently beautiful. "Nothing," says Mr. Moore, the writer who has already been quoted, "can be more romantic than the little harbour of St. George's. The number of beautiful islets, the singular clearness of the water, and the animated play of the graceful little boats, gliding for ever between the islands, and seeming to sail from one cedar grove into another, form altogether the sweetest miniature of nature that can be imagined." "In the short but beautiful twilight of their spring evenings," he adds, "the white cottages scattered over the islands, and but partially seen through the trees that surround them, assume often the appearance of little Grecian temples, and embellish the poor fisherman's hut with columns which the pencil of Claude might imitate." If the fancy of the poet have not lent a delusive colouring to the picture, it is evident, that, however inferior in a commercial point of view these islands may be to others, there are few, if any, of our colonies that can pretend to rival them in the charms of scenery, and in the

consequent power of attracting and affording pleasure to the traveller who is possessed of taste and feeling.

DEMERARA, ESSEQUIBO AND BERBICE.

Stretching along the coast of the Atlantic, between the latitudes of six and eight degrees north, and the longitudes of fifty-seven and fifty-nine degrees west, lies that part of Dutch Guyana which contains the colony of Demerara, its dependent settlement of Essequibo, and the colony of Berbice. To the south south-west, the river Courantin separates this tract from Surinam; to the north north-east, the small inlet and stream of Moroko divides it from the Spanish territory on the right bank of the Orinoco. Its length on the coast, in a straight line, is about a hundred and sixty miles; its breadth is not exactly ascertained, but is nearly twice its length, and reaches to the scantily known provinces of New Cumana and New Andalusia, which are claimed by the Spaniards, but are, in part, inhabited by independent Indian tribes. The limits of Berbice, to the south south-west, formerly extended no further than to the Devil's Creek, but in 1799 they were enlarged by the addition of the lands between that creek and the river Courantin. The opposite boundary of the colony, where Demerara commences, passes

from the mouth of Abary Creek, in a straight line to the southward. Between this line and a similar one drawn from the Boarisirie Creek, at the mouth of the Essequibo river, is included the colony of Demerara. The dependency of Essequibo occupies the rest of the territory as far as the Spanish frontier on the Moroko.

The climate of what may now be called British Guyana is more healthy than that of most tropical countries. This probably arises from the constant flowing in of the trade-wind, which is cooled down by its passage over an immense expanse of ocean. Independent of this wind, there are daily two beneficial currents of air, the sea breeze and the land breeze, the first and coolest of which blows during the day from the north-east, and moderates the heat, while the land breeze, which is much warmer, sets in from the south-east during the night, and prevents the too great chilness which would otherwise be felt. In the dry season, which is the hottest, the range of the thermometer, on the coast, is from eighty-four to ninety degrees. There are two wet and two dry seasons. The wet seasons occupy part of December, and the whole of January, February, June, July and August; the dry seasons extend through the remaining months, and are exceedingly beautiful, the temperature being then regular, and the sky clear and vividly blue. In proportion as the forests fall before the axe, the

rains become less heavy. The morning twilight, like ours, is gradual; that of the evening, on the contrary, can hardly be said to exist, as the sun sets instantaneously, and darkness immediately ensues. The length of the days is from thirteen to fourteen hours. Hurricanes, the scourge of the West India islands, are here unknown. Squalls sometimes occur, but they are never so violent as to inflict on the planter any serious injury. The blowing down of a few acres of plantain-trees is the worst effect which is produced by their fury. British Guyana is also happily exempt from the drought, which is often fatal to the crops in some of the insular colonies.

The principal rivers which water this district are the Essequibo, the Demerara, the Courantin, the Berbice, the Canje and the Pomaroon. The first of these rivers is by far the largest. It runs a course of nearly four hundred miles, receives many considerable streams, is thickly studded with islands, and where, through four mouths, it empties its waters into the sea, it is one and twenty miles in width. The Demerara and the Courantin stand next in point of size. They are all navigable, and the chief of them are so to a considerable distance. The entrance of them is, however, somewhat difficult, in consequence of the bars of mud which have been formed by the deposits from their waters.

The land for many leagues into the interior

is perfectly flat. It has not an eminence of even the size of a mole-hill. Scarcely a stone is any where to be found, throughout a wide extent of country. The whole soil, which consists of mud and clay, seems, indeed, to have been formed, in the course of ages, by a subsidence from the rivers; and the same process is still undoubtedly going on, as the sea is extremely shallow and turbid, at a considerable distance from the shore. Centuries, however, will probably elapse before the ocean is excluded from its present bed by the slow accretion of alluvial soil. So low is the land, that, as the voyager approaches it, the forests, which, where cultivation has not exterminated them, extend down to the verge of the sea, appear to rise from the midst of the waters. That part of the territory which is yet untouched by the toiling hand of man, displays either thick woods or extensive savannahs. It is along the coast, and on the banks of the rivers and creeks, that the plantations are principally established. There are some settlements as far up the river Demerara as two hundred miles from its entrance into the sea.

Cotton, sugar and coffee, are the staple articles of these colonies. Rum is, of course, manufactured to a great extent, and, from the care which is taken in the distillation, it is in high repute in the American market. Several sorts of timber, fit for ship and other building,

and for ornamental uses, are produced here, and large quantities of mill timber, for the erection of sugar-works, are exported to the islands. The forests are also capable of nearly, if not entirely, supplying the home consumption of shingles, hoops and staves. Rice may be raised, in many parts, with as much success as in Carolina, and the savannahs are admirably calculated for the fattening of oxen, which are in plenty, as are likewise sheep, goats and swine.

The original settlements of the Dutch were, in general, formed as far up the rivers as the soil was good, and the navigation could be conveniently carried on. A wish to obtain security from those predatory expeditions which had desolated the Spanish districts on the coast, was probably their reason for receding to such a distance from the sea. It is only of comparatively recent date that plantations have been made on the more fertile alluvial soil which borders upon the Atlantic; and it is by the adventurous spirit of British speculation, that this long-neglected territory has been converted into a prolific source of riches, and a residence fit for man. Previously to the French revolutionary war, many English were settled in these colonies, and the beneficial influence of their presence had begun to be apparent; but, since the first conquest of Demerara, in 1795, the number has been immensely multiplied, and a vast amount of capital has been em-

ployed in calling forth the latent energies of the soil. The result of this has been, that the sugar estates have encreased in a six-fold proportion, and that the cultivation of coffee, and especially of cotton, has been pushed forward in a still larger proportion. In less than twenty years, British skill and enterprise have worked a change, which would scarcely have been accomplished in two centuries by the tardy exertions of the Batavian colonists. The line of cultivation now extends, nearly if not quite unbroken, from the western bank of the Courantin to the mouth of the Pomaroon.

Each plantation consists of an oblong piece of ground, a hundred roods in width, and seven hundred and fifty in depth. By the condition of the grants, the proprietor may obtain as much more, behind his original allotment, when two-thirds of that original allotment have been brought into a productive state. This second portion has, in numerous instances, been claimed and cultivated. In front of each estate is a massy dyke, which protects the property from being inundated by the spring tides; behind is another, intended to keep off the waters that come from the forest, or bush, as it is colonially called; and between each two plantations is a broad track, with a navigable canal in the centre, which is public property, and is termed a colony path. So that these plantations form, in fact, a collection of

islands, which can be entered only by means of bridges or boats. The plantations themselves are likewise intersected by a great number of drains, and all these water-courses are carefully cleansed, at stated periods, when the mud that is removed serves at once to manure and to elevate the ground. Canals have also been carried into the interior, for several miles, in order to facilitate the settling of new estates.

The early history of these colonies presents to the view nothing which can excite or gratify a national curiosity. Berbice was the first settled, as early as the year 1620; Essequibo the next; and Demerara the last. For many years their culture and commerce was in a languishing state. Demerara, however, had gained so much the start of Essequibo that, in 1774, the seat of government was removed from Essequibo, and Stabroek was founded. From that period, Essequibo, which had hitherto been the principal, became a dependency of Demerara. In the year 1763, a rebellion of the slaves took place in Berbice. They massacred many of the whites, and threw the survivers into such consternation, that they fled on board of their vessels, and abandoned the colony to the revolters. The same fate would have been shared by Demerara and Essequibo, where the slaves were ready to break out, had not a timely succour been dispatched by some gentlemen of Barbadoes, who

were also holders of plantations in the menaced colonies. The arrival of assistance, from Surinam, enabled the governor of Berbice, meanwhile, to effect a landing, and to establish himself in a strong post, till an armament of sufficient strength to recover the colony could be sent from Holland. By the exertions of this latter force, and of several hundred Indians, the inveterate foes of the blacks, the rebels were at length routed, driven into the woods, and finally hunted down; many of them being again plunged into slavery, and several hundreds, who had taken a leading part, being either burnt alive, broken upon the wheel, or otherwise put to death, in the most barbarous manner that revenge and cruelty could devise. Those few who escaped have since occasionally been joined by fugitives from the estates, and these men are known by the name of bush negroes. Six years subsequently to this rebellion, Berbice was exposed to another calamity. The woods on the coast were set on fire, a crime which was attributed to the rebel negroes, and the conflagration progressively extended from the river Courantin to the Demerara, destroying the forests, and devastating several rich plantations. In the year 1781 these colonies were reduced by a small British force, but they did not long remain in the possession of their new masters, they being recaptured by the French, in the succeeding year. The two subsequent conquests of

them, in 1796 and 1803, have already been described. By a convention, signed at London, on the 13th of August, 1814, Demerara, Essequibo and Berbice became a part of the British dominions, to the great satisfaction of all the colonial inhabitants. Since then, the prosperity of these colonies has experienced a rapid increase, and is still gaining ground; so that the produce raised, and the shipping employed, now equal in value and number more than one-third of the produce and shipping of the long-settled and flourishing island of Jamaica, which, since the loss of America, has always been justly reckoned the colonial gem of the British crown.

Stabroek, the capital of Demerara, is situated in 6° 50′ north latitude, on the east side and near the mouth of the river which gives name to the colony. It is of an oblong form, about a quarter of a mile in breadth, and a mile in length; it stands on a low and level site, and the principal streets are perfectly straight, with carriage roads. The houses are of wood, two or three stories high, and raised on brick foundations. In the public buildings there is nothing which merits a particular description. Kingston, Labourgade, Bridge Town, New Town, and Cumingsburgh are villages in the vicinity of Stabroek. They all owe their erection to the British, and some of them, particularly Cumingsburgh, will probably, at no distant period, rise to the rank of consider-

able towns. Kingston was begun by the British officers, in 1796, and is now the favourite country residence of the Stabroek merchants. New Town consists of four principal streets, and is filled with tradesmen of all denominations. There is likewise a considerable village called Mahaica, on the river of that name, about thirty miles east of Stabroek, where many of the principal settlers have handsome villas, the air of this spot having the reputation of peculiar salubrity.

The former capital of Berbice, called Zealandica, or Old Amsterdam, was built about fifty miles up the river, by the first settlers. In process of time, however, as the colony grew more peopled, and cultivation became more extensive, this situation was found to be subject to great inconvenience, from the difficulty with which vessels were worked up the winding river, and the frequency with which they grounded on the numerous muddy shoals, whence it was sometimes impracticable to get them off till they were set afloat by the rising of the spring tides. It was accordingly resolved to remove the seat of government to a more suitable spot, within a mile of the sea. This resolution was carried into effect in the year 1795. At the confluence of the Canje with the Berbice a town was then laid out, which was called New Amsterdam. This town has attained a considerable size. It extends a mile and a half along the Berbice; each house

having an allotment of a quarter of an acre, and being completely insulated by trenches, which fill and empty themselves as the tide rises and recedes, and thus prevent the pestiferous accumulation of filth and dirt that might otherwise take place. The government house is of brick, in the European stile of architecture, with a fine view of the river and the surrounding country, and is considered as the most magnificent and spacious building which is to be seen in any part of the colonies of Guyana.

The powers of government reside in the governor, and a council, called the College of Keizers. To this college each colony sends six members, who are chosen by the planters and merchants. Every possessor of twenty-five negroes is entitled to a vote in the election of the keizers. The governor is the president of the college, with the privilege of a casting vote. The authority of the council extends to the appointment of members for the courts of police and judicature, and likewise to the financial department, as far as belongs to the proper distribution of the taxes which are raised for the purposes of internal improvement. The supreme court of justice is composed of six members and the governor, and sits every other month at the court-house. An appeal may be made from its sentence to the king in council. There is likewise a subordinate court, called the Commissary Court,

which has only three members. Its business is to decide upon suits for debts not exceeding fifty pounds, and to grant licenses to persons who intend to marry. In addition to these, there is a weeskamer's office, or orphan chamber, which administers the affairs of orphans, and of those colonists who may chance to die intestate. The fiscal is the great law officer of the colony, and combines the various functions of chief magistrate and attorney and solicitor-general, with a discretionary power of levying fines in certain cases; a power which must be exceedingly liable to abuse, as a portion of the fines which the fiscal levies are received into his own pocket. He has under him the drossart, who acts as sheriff, or head jailer, and the dienaars, who fill the place of constables or watchmen, and have the charge of the jail and police. In these colonies, as in most other countries, law is tardy in its movements, and insatiable in its demands upon the purses of those who are unfortunately compelled to have recourse to its assistance. It not unfrequently happens, therefore, that, rather than encounter the trouble and expence of appealing to the courts, individuals are induced to pass over, in prudent silence, the wrongs which they have sustained.

Each individual, between the ages of sixteen and fifty, is compelled to enrol himself in the burgher militia, and is liable to be called out at

the pleasure of the governor. The service of the militia does not, however, extend any further than to the preservation of the internal tranquillity of the colonies. In the country, the officers of this body are justices of the peace, and each of them exercises a jurisdiction over a certain district, which districts are distinguished by different coloured banners. They are termed burgher officers, and it is their business to promulgate proclamations, take depositions upon tax schedules, carry into effect the public and local laws, and put down any disturbances which may arise, within the limits over which their authority extends. They are appointed by the court of police, and are under the command of a lieutenant-colonel.

The military force stationed in British Guyana is of respectable strength; the colonists themselves are strongly attached to the government, and have displayed great readiness to volunteer their services on the appearance of danger; the approach to the coasts is of no common difficulty; and signal posts have been established along the shore, to give instant notice of an enemy being at hand; so that it does not appear to be probable that, in any future war, a hostile power would have the smallest chance of dissevering these colonies from that empire to which they have recently been united.

HONDURAS.

The settlement of Honduras is situated in the province of Yucutan, between the seventeenth and nineteenth degrees of north latitude, and the eighty-eighth and ninetieth degrees of west longitude. The line which includes it commences at the mouth of the Rio Hondo, follows the course of, and afterwards runs parallel with, that stream for about thirty miles; then, turning southward, passes through New River Lake in a straight line to the river Balize, up which it ascends for a considerable distance, and then again proceeds south, till it reaches the head of the Sibun, the windings of which river it pursues to the sea coast. On the land side, the settlement is effectually protected from attack, by rivers, lakes and morasses; on the sea board it is rendered almost equally inaccessible by a chain of islands, rocks and shoals, which stretches along the whole line of coast, for a space of nearly three degrees.

The cutting of logwood used formerly to be carried on near the Laguna de Terminos, in the Bay of Campeachy, and the right of doing so was often a subject of sharp dispute between the British and Spanish governments. In the year 1717, a representation, strongly asserting this right, was made by the board of trade to George the First, in consequence of the Spaniards having threatened that they would treat the logwood

cutters as pirates. It appears, however, that, between this period and the year 1759, the log-wood cutters had removed to the Bay of Honduras, as, in the latter year, we find that they were so extensively established in the bay, that their exports and imports far exceeded in value those of the Musquito shore, which were to no despicable amount. It was with the concurrence of the neighbouring Indians that the new establishment was formed. By the treaty of Paris, in 1763, the King of Spain agreed to allow the settlers to reside within a certain district, on condition that all the present fortifications should be destroyed, and that no other should be erected. He also engaged, in case of a war, to grant six months for the removal of British property. With the exception of some injustice done by the governor of Yucutan, in 1764, which was disavowed by the Spanish court, things remained in this state till the breaking out of the war between England and Spain. Notwithstanding the stipulation in the treaty, that time should be allowed for removal, the Spaniards, in September 1779, seized upon the settlement, made the settlers prisoners, treated them with extraordinary severity, and held them in captivity till the month of July, 1782. No indemnification was ever obtained for this outrage, nor for the destruction of property which attended it.

At the close of the war, the settlers were re-established, on the same terms as formerly, and the rivers Balize and Hondo were assigned as their limits. By a convention, which was concluded with Spain, in the year 1786, the limits were extended southward, from the Balize to the Sibun, in consideration of the British relinquishing their establishments on the Musquito shore.

In the year 1788 Honduras experienced a severe natural visitation. Early in the morning of September the twenty-third, a destructive hurricane began, the rain fell in torrents, and the sea rising, in conjunction with the swollen rivers, overflowed the low lands. All the houses and other constructions, to the number of five hundred, on both sides of the Balize, were levelled with the ground, and their contents destroyed. Many of the unfortunate inhabitants were drowned. In the harbour eleven square-rigged vessels and other craft were totally lost, and more than a hundred persons perished.

After this calamity nothing of moment occurred till the year 1798, when Field-marshal O'Neil was gallantly foiled in an attack, which has already been noticed in the history of the war. Inspirited probably by this triumph, the settlers considerably extended their limits, an extension which was indeed become necessary, in consequence of the growing scarcity of mahogany and dye-woods in the districts hitherto

explored. Forts were also erected, to protect the settlers from annoyance.

When the peace of Amiens was concluded, Honduras was not mentioned in it, nor were those previous treaties renewed by which our right of possession was secured. This oversight, for such it undoubtedly was, gave rise to no small alarm on the part of the settlers, and of the merchants connected with the trade, as there appeared, in the Spanish government, prompted perhaps by the French, a strong disposition to consider the settlement as an encroachment, which was now wholly unauthorized. The war, however, which speedily ensued, put an end to all discussion, and since that period Honduras has remained undisturbed under the British authority.

The climate of Honduras is remarkably healthy. Even the rainy season is not, as in the West Indies, productive of disease. The average temperature of heat is about eighty degrees. The soil is fertile, and capable of producing every article which is raised in our western insular colonies. Oxen, cows, sheep and goats thrive uncommonly well; and the sea is abundantly stored with turtle, and various species of fish. The vegetable tribe presents a copious catalogue. Among the trees are the mahogany, the fustic, the logwood, the mangrove, the cedar, the cocoa-nut, the palmetto, and many more, some of

which, as the palma Christi, the jatropha, and others, are endowed with medicinal virtues.

The mahogany, which is one of the principal exports of the settlement, is cut at two seasons; the one of which commences shortly after Christmas, the other towards the middle of the year. At those periods every individual is actively occupied, either in felling the trees, conveying them in trucks to the rivers, or precipitating them into the stream which is to forward them to their destination. From ten to fifty negroes, but seldom more than fifty, are employed in each gang. From each gang one of the most intelligent negroes is selected, who is styled the huntsman, and whose business it is to search the woods for the mahogany trees, which are seldom found in groups, but single and often much dispersed. The beginning of August is the time at which he commences his search. He penetrates to the highest ground, and there, climbing the tallest tree that he can find, he surveys the country round him. The colour of the foliage of the mahogany, which is now a reddish yellow, leads his eye to the spot where the wood is most abundant; and to that spot, without compass or guide, he unerringly directs his way; compelled also to use numberless stratagems, to prevent his footsteps from being tracked by rival huntsmen, who otherwise would not fail to seize upon the prize

which he had discovered. The mahogany is usually cut about twelve feet from the ground, by a man who stands upon a stage erected for the purpose. It is sometimes roughly squared on the place where it has been felled, but this labour is generally postponed till the logs have been conveyed to the mouths of the different rivers. As the logs are brought to the water side they are thrown into the river, down which they are floated to the booms, which are large cables, stretched across the stream at the various falls. Sometimes the boom breaks with the pressure, and more than a thousand logs are hurried to the sea, and irretrievably lost. At the booms, each settler sorts out his own logs, and forms them into a raft, which often consists of two hundred logs, and has as many miles to be piloted before it reaches its destination. The last day of falling, if the season have been a successful one, is always a day of festivity and merriment.

The only town in the settlement is that of Balize, which is situated on the river of the same name, near its entrance into the sea. It contains about two hundred houses, many of which are large, commodious, and elegantly finished. The banks of the Balize and Sibun, particularly of the latter, are thickly studded with plantations. The population consists of two hundred whites, rather more than five hundred people of colour and free

blacks, and three thousand negro slaves. The slaves are treated with great kindness by their masters; a sufficient proof of which is, that they are universally entrusted with arms.

Till the year 1779, Honduras was wholly without laws, or regulations of any kind, and the consequence was, that numerous crimes were committed. Captain Burnaby then framed a code, which still retains his name, and is considered as the statute law of the settlement. Justice is at present administered by a bench of seven magistrates, who are annually elected. The courts hold their sittings thrice in a year, and inferior courts are occasionally held, to take cognizance of matters of a trifling nature. The domestic revenue of the settlement is about six or seven thousand pounds, Jamaica currency, and is disposed of at the discretion of the magistracy. It arises from taxes on transient traders, on wines and spirits, on liquor shops and public retailers of goods, and from certain small tonnage and harbour duties. In the year 1816, Honduras took from the mother country to the amount of between forty-three and forty-four thousand pounds, in manufactures, and other articles of needful consumption.

ST. LUCIA.

This island, one of the Caribbean chain, is situated between the latitudes of thirteen and fourteen degrees north, and the longitudes of fifty-nine and a half and sixty and a half west. It has Martinico on the north, at the distance of about twenty miles, and St. Vincent's on the south, at a smaller distance. Seen from the south, in the strait which divides it from St. Vincent's, it appears, says Mr. M'Kinnen, "to be composed of several hills, in the shape of cones immersed in water, and an assemblage of grand and more elevated mountains clothed in wood, which occupy the central parts. The vivid green of the cane-fields, which I beheld on its southern and eastern shores, and in the apertures between the hills or on their sides, was beautifully contrasted by the sombre shades of the forest which covers the great body of the island." Unlike the mountains of St. Vincent's, which are rounded off into something of a regular form, those of St. Lucia are, in general, sharp, angular and abrupt, having rude and craggy summits, broken into lofty pyramids, of naked rocks and broken precipices. On the south-west shore, are two towering conical hills, called Sugar-loaves by the English, and Pitons by the French, which seem to the voyager as if they hung suspended over the waves, and are said to bear an exact resem-

blance to the two peaks of the Pyrenean mountain named Canigou, except that the peaks of the Canigou are entirely destitute of verdure, which is not the case with the Sugar-loaf mountains. Subterraneous fire has, at some former but distant period, been active in St. Lucia, and the traces of it are still visible, in the existence of craters, hot springs, and similar volcanic indications.

That the climate of St. Lucia is unhealthy, was fatally proved by the mortality which rapidly thinned the ranks of the British troops in 1781, and also after the conquest of the colony in 1794. It is, however, certainly less unhealthy than it formerly was. The baneful influence of the climate is attributed, and no doubt justly, to two causes; the thickness of the woods, and the stagnation of some of the small streams into marshy pools. In proportion, therefore, as the ground is cleared, a free circulation of air is procured, and the marshes are drained, St. Lucia will become gradually less insalubrious, till at length it will not be more subject than the neighbouring islands to the ravages of disease.

The soil of St. Lucia is fertile. The finest part of the colony is the south-west quarter, which is well cultivated, and thickly inhabited. The interior is nearly desert. The productions of the island are sugar, coffee, cocoa, cotton and indigo. The coffee is said to be superior in quality to

that of Martinico. Within the last thirty years the quantity of produce has, perhaps, been more than doubled. In 1788, the population was 20,918 persons, of whom 2,159 were whites. The natural effect of the war which ensued, during which St. Lucia was so long one of the chief scenes of action, was the destruction of many estates, the death or banishment of many of the proprietors and slaves, and a consequent diminution in the number of inhabitants. The population, in 1814, was only 17,485, of whom 1,210 were whites. Since the restoration of peace, and the cession of the colony to Great Britain, it is, however, believed to be once more increasing.

The name of St. Lucia is derived from the saint's day on which it was discovered. It was not till 1639 that any attempt was made to form a settlement on this island. It was then taken possession of by the English. Two years afterwards, however, the governor and most of the settlers were murdered by the Charaibes, and the survivers were driven out. The French at Martinico, dreading the proximity of their rivals, were supposed to have been the stimulators of the Charaibes to this act of barbarity. They themselves, nevertheless, did not endeavour to form any establishment in St. Lucia till nearly ten years after this massacre had taken place. In 1650 they sent over a small number of colo-

nists, scarcely exceeding forty, with a governor at their head. But the Charaibes were not more desirous of having the French than the English as their neighbours; and they accordingly commenced hostilities, killed two of the French governors, and confined the colonists within narrow bounds. Having entered into a treaty with the natives, the English, in 1664, again landed, to the number of fifteen hundred, and obliged the garrison of the French fort, which consisted of only fourteen men, to retire to Martinico. The dysentery, however, made such havoc among the new comers, who were also left without succours, that, at the expiration of two years, they destroyed the fort, and withdrew from the island. For half a century subsequently to their departure, St. Lucia remained unoccupied. The governor of Barbadoes, nevertheless, used frequently to perform the ceremony of landing, and planting the royal standard, in order to prevent any dispute as to the right of sovereignty. In 1719 Marshal d'Etrees wished to form an establishment, but this was opposed by the British ministry; and three years afterwards, George the First made a grant of this island, and likewise of St. Vincent's, to John, Duke of Montague. The duke took immediate measures for carrying the scheme of colonization into effect on a magnificent scale. Under convoy of a man of war, he dispatched six vessels, with a party consisting of

two governors, fifty-one other officers, and four hundred and twenty-five individuals. They were liberally provided with stores, provisions, artillery and every thing that was necessary for an infant colony. Useful artificers and workmen were allured to lend their services by the certainty of an ample reward. No less a sum than forty thousand pounds is said to have been expended in the fitting out of this expedition. The settlers, however, had no sooner begun to clear the ground for a fort, than they received a notice from the governor of Martinico, that he had orders to dislodge them by arms, in case of their hesitating to retire within fifteen days. This notice was backed by the disembarkation of two thousand five hundred men from Martinico and Guadaloupe; and, as the English were too weak to cope with this force, they consented to withdraw, on condition that the colony should be left in its former neutral state, till the two crowns should come to a decision on the subject. This decision was not given till the year 1730, when the neutrality of St. Lucia was admitted by both parties. It was confirmed, in 1748, by the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle. Notwithstanding this agreement, the French still persisted in making settlements, and this conduct they continued for many years, without being molested by the British. At length, in 1762, after the reduction of

Martinico, a small squadron was sent against St. Lucia, which was compelled to capitulate.

By the treaty of Paris, in 1763, it was settled that the neutral islands, as they were called, should be divided between Great Britain and France. To Great Britain, Dominica, St. Vincent's and Tobago were assigned; St. Lucia fell to the share of France. The French cultivated their new acquisition with such spirit, that they speedily made it a colony of considerable value. In the year 1777, it contained no less than fifty-three sugar plantations, besides numerous plantations of coffee, cotton and cocoa; it had a population of between nineteen and twenty thousand individuals, more than two thousand of whom were whites; and the value of its exports was three millions of livres, being nearly a hundred and thirty-four thousand pounds.

Such was the state of St. Lucia when, in 1778, a war once more broke out between the rival nations. Having received a considerable reinforcement from Sir Henry Clinton, who was then at New York, the British commanders in the West Indies resolved to employ a part of it, under Major-general Grant, in the conquest of St. Lucia. When they came to this resolution, they were not aware that it would place the ships and troops in a situation of extreme peril, from which, however, they would ultimately ex-

tricate themselves with more than equal glory. The landing was effected, in the Grand Cul de Sac, on the evening of the thirteenth of December, by Brigadier-generals Meadows and Prescot. The Chevalier de Micoud, whose force was quite incompetent to a protracted resistance, was speedily driven from all the posts in the vicinity, among which were the Vigie and Morne Fortune. As the British advanced, they carefully secured all the heights, and amply manned the batteries, a precaution which, though it then seemed to be dictated by an excess of prudence, was afterwards mainly conducive to the safety of both the fleet and army. The peninsular position of the Vigie, at the extremity of the English line, was occupied by thirteen hundred men, under General Meadows, while the principal part of the army, under General Grant, was stationed on the hills, between the Carenage and the bay of the Grand Cul de Sac, in which the fleet was at anchor.

By a singular coincidence it had happened, that the French fleet of twelve large ships of the line, under D'Estaing, sailed from Boston, on the same day that the British fleet, greatly inferior in strength, sailed from Sandy Hooke, and that, for a part of their course, they sailed in parallel and not distant lines, towards the West Indies. A violent gale, during which Commodore Hotham kept his ships together, while those of

D'Estaing were dispersed, at once saved the English vessels from falling in with their too powerful adversaries, and enabled them to reach the West Indies before D'Estaing, and to form a junction with Admiral Barrington. The squadron, however, even after the junction, consisted of only one seventy-four, one seventy, two sixty-fours, two fifties, and three frigates. It was now lying in the bay of the Grand Cul de Sac, intermixed with the transports, which there had not been time to remove round to the harbour of the Carenage.

D'Estaing's squadron was intended to be employed in the reduction of Grenada and St. Vincent's, in the first place; after which it was to fall upon any of the English colonies that might appear to be defenceless. The force with which this was to be achieved consisted of about nine thousand men, partly sent from France, and partly collected in the French islands. In addition to his men of war, he was joined at Martinico by a crowd of transports, privateers and frigates. At Martinico he learned that St. Lucia was attacked, and it is probable that he heard the news with pleasure, as this attack seemed to afford him an opportunity of catching the British fleet and army as it were in a net, and thus striking a blow, which could scarcely fail to be decisive.

Fortunately for his antagonists, it was so

late in the day when D'Estaing appeared off St. Lucia, that he thought it proper to wait till the following morning, before he commenced his operations. Admiral Barrington availed himself of this delay, to station the transports in the bottom of the Cul de Sac, and to moor his ships in a line at the entrance, flanked by two batteries, one on each side of the harbour. By the morning his defensive preparations were completed. D'Estaing was as yet ignorant that the Vigie, which commands the Carenage, was in the power of the invaders, and therefore, with the view of landing his troops, and erecting batteries on the heights, to drive the British from the Cul de Sac, he bent his course towards the harbour of the Carenage. He was received there by a discharge of artillery, which convinced him that nothing could be done in that quarter. After some hesitation, he bore down upon the British squadron with ten sail of the line, and commenced a vigorous attack, in which, however, he was gallantly repulsed. At four in the afternoon he renewed the engagement, with twelve sail, and continued it with more perseverance, and a heavier weight of fire, but with no better success. He was finally driven back in confusion, without having made the smallest impression on his opponents. On the next day he appeared to be disposed to return to the combat; but, at length, instructed by his two defeats, he

changed his mind, stood to windward, anchored in Gros Islet Bay, and employed that night and the following morning in disembarking the troops. It was now the turn of the French soldiery to try what they could achieve against an enemy by whom their naval armament had already been foiled.

The plan of the French generals was, to seize on the heights which commanded the Cul de Sac, and, by means of a bombardment, to compel the British squadron to quit its present anchorage. To their great disappointment, however, they found those heights so strongly occupied by General Grant, as to make it impossible for them to carry their plan into effect, without risking a battle on disadvantageous terms. This was a risk which they did not choose to encounter. As their first project was become impracticable, they determined to bend their efforts against General Meadows, whose position could receive no other support from the main body of the army than what was given by two batteries on the south side of the Carenage, and who, if overpowered, was without the means of retreat. It was thought that the cutting off of this division, an event which appeared highly probable, could not fail to decide the contest in favour of the French.

Leaving about four thousand of his troops, to prevent General Grant from detaching any

part of his force to interrupt their operations, the French generals, on the 18th of February, led five thousand men to storm the lines which the British had thrown up to cover the position of the Vigie. They advanced in three columns, the right headed by the Count D'Estaing, the centre by M. de Lovendahl, the right by the Marquis de Bouillé. As the columns approached the position of General Meadows, they were enfiladed by the batteries on the other side of the Carenage, and suffered severely. They, nevertheless, rushed to the assault of the lines with impetuous bravery. The coolness and firmness of the defenders were, however, more than a match for the impetuosity of the assailants. Not a shot was fired by the British till the columns were at the foot of the entrenchments. One destructive volley was then poured in, and the French were received on the point of the bayonet. The struggle was long and terrible. At last the French were driven back with heavy slaughter; seventy of them are said to have fallen within the works on the very first onset. In spite of this fierce repulse, they paused only to rally and recover breath, and then hurried back with undiminished fury. The second conflict was no less violent than the first. It terminated in the same manner as the first had done. Though their ranks were sorely thinned by this double discomfiture, they were induced by their leaders

to make a third charge. But they had no longer that ardour which originally inspired them. They were speedily broken, overwhelmed, and scattered in complete and irretrievable disorder. Their dead and wounded even were left in the hands of the victors. The battle being over, however, M. D'Estaing entered into an agreement with General Meadows, by which he was suffered to bury the slain, and to carry away the wounded, on condition that the latter should be considered as prisoners of war.

So great a slaughter has seldom taken place in so short a time. Its amount exceeded the number of the English troops. Four hundred men were slain on the spot; five hundred were so desperately wounded as to be disabled from service; and six hundred more received wounds of a slighter kind. The loss of the victors was comparatively as trifling, and not a single officer was among the killed.

This blow seems to have had the effect of absolutely palsying all the faculties of M. D'Estaing. He was still far superior in naval and military strength to the British; he was master of the sea, with a French colony, that of Martinico, close at hand, whence he could draw resources; and the Chevalier de Micoud still held a part of the posts in St. Lucia; yet M. D'Estaing could not rouse his courage to any further exertions. Without any apparent object, unless

he imagined that his presence would do what his arms had failed to accomplish, he lingered ten days inactive upon the island, and then embarked his troops, and resigned it to its fate. The Chevalier de Micoud was now bereft of all hope, and accordingly, before the squadron of M. D'Estaing was out of sight, he surrendered the colony to the British commanders, from whom he obtained more favourable terms than, in his defenceless situation, he had any reason to expect.

Notwithstanding the disasters which, during the war, the British sustained in the West Indies, they kept possession of St. Lucia. The French landed a body of troops, in May 1781, but, finding that every thing was prepared to give them a rude reception, they thought proper to re-embark. The colony, however, proved fatal to very many of the flower of the English troops, who sank beneath the malignant influence of its noxious climate. As a colonial acquisition it fully answered the expectations of its conquerors. From the time that it fell into the hands of the British, its prosperity rapidly encreased, so that, in the year 1782, its exports amounted in value to more than a quarter of a million sterling, and its imports to a hundred and forty thousand pounds.

By the treaty of 1783, St. Lucia was restored to France. In the year 1788 it was visited by a tremendous hurricane, during the continuance

of which an earthquake took place, which is said to have destroyed several hundred of the inhabitants. The subsequent history of the colony has already been related, in the former part of this volume.

St. Lucia is divided into eleven parishes or districts, which bear the names of Castries, Ance la Raye, Souffriere, Choiseul, Laborie, Vieux Fort, Micoud, Praslin, D'Ennery, Dauphin, and Gros Islet. The most populous districts, arranged in the order of the population, are those of Souffriere, Castries, Laborie, Gros Islet, Vieux Fort, and Choiseul, the first of which has 4,116 inhabitants, and the last 1,496. The capital of the island is the town of Castries, which is situated at the extremity of the harbour of the Carenage, but is small, and contains nothing that is worthy of notice. It was totally destroyed by fire, on the sixth of April, 1814, but has since been rebuilt. Souffriere, the former capital, lies considerably farther to the south, and is equally destitute of remarkable objects. The harbour of the Carenage is an excellent one. It is unassailable by an enemy who is not master of the surrounding heights; it has a sufficient depth of water and a good bottom; it is free from the worms which are so destructive to shipping; it has three admirable careening places, and is capacious enough to afford protection from hurricanes, without the ships being moored, to at least thirty sail of the line, which can go out with any wind,

so that the largest squadron may be in the offing in less than an hour. These circumstances, and the nearness of St. Lucia to the colony of Martinico, render the island of infinite value as a naval station, and would have justified the British ministry in selecting it as an object of cession to this country, even were it of less importance than it really is in a colonial point of view.

TOBAGO.

Between the eleventh and twelfth degrees of north latitude, and the fifty-ninth and sixtieth degrees of west longitude, about twenty-five miles to the north of Trinidad, is situated the island of Tobago, which is the most southerly of all the Caribbee islands. The length of it is thirty-two miles, and the greatest breadth is thirteen. Tobago has little geological resemblance to the rest of the Caribbean chain. The land near the sea is level, particularly in the west and south-west, and though the interior is mountainous, yet the mountains are not broken and angular, but rounded in their forms, and regularly sloped from their bases to their summits. From these eminences a number of streams descend, along the pleasant intervening vallies, in all directions. Mr. Hamilton, who had often traversed the country, assured Sir William Young that there was no where a rock, and scarcely a large stone, to be found, except upon the coasts and the

beach. The same has been remarked by a more recent traveller. Volcanic fire seems never to have been felt here; but the shape of the hills plainly indicates the long continued presence of water, acting in rotatory and undulatory currents.

Tobago has a healthy climate, and the heat is not so violent as it might be supposed to be from the proximity of the equator. It has likewise the advantage of lying out of the track of the hurricanes. The soil is light, fertile, and of considerable depth. Sugar-canes and cotton are its chief produce, but coffee and indigo are also cultivated. The savannahs afford abundant food for cattle, and the woods in the interior contain plenty of excellent timber, of various kinds. Pimento has been raised with success, though the culture of it is now abandoned for that of sugar, and there is a species of cinnamon which grows wild in the woods.

When Tobago was first discovered by Columbus, from whom it received its name, it was inhabited by a native race of Indians. These Indians were almost always at war with the Arrowauks, who dwelt on the neighbouring continent, and were at last so much harassed by them, that they abandoned their homes, and took shelter in St. Vincent's. Charles the First is said to have made a grant of Tobago, in 1628, to the Earl of Pembroke and Montgomery, but

it does not appear that the earl took any steps to avail himself of this donation The island remained uninhabited for many years, till, in 1632, a company of merchants of Flushing, commenced a settlement upon it, of two hundred persons, and gave it the name of New Walcheren. The colonists were not suffered to continue long in quiet. In 1634, before they had completed a fort which they had begun, they were attacked by the Spaniards and Indians of Trinidad, who massacred many of them, destroyed the fort, and carried off prisoners all who could not effect their escape into the woods. When the Spaniards were departed, the survivors gave up all hope of establishing themselves, and returned to Holland.

For twenty years the island was suffered to lie in a desert state. At length, in 1654, Adrian and Cornelius Lampsins, merchants of Flushing, who were the founders of the Dutch colony in St. Martin's, obtained from the States-General a grant of Tobago. They appointed Hubert de Beveren as governor, who fixed the seat of government in Rockly Bay, where Scarborough now stands. Under the protecting and enlightened care of the Lampsins, and the wise administration of de Beveren, the colony soon attained to a considerable degree of prosperity. About the same time that the Dutch settled at Rockly Bay, the Duke of Courland, who was aspiring to become a commercial power, resolved to form a

colony in Tobago, and, in pursuance of this resolution, he sent over a hundred families, who landed in a bay, which still bears the name of Courland Bay. The Dutch beheld the new comers with a jealous eye, and a slight skirmish took place between them and the Courlanders, a few days after the landing of the latter. An agreement was, however, soon made between them, not to molest each other, and to refer the question, as to the right of occupation, to their respective sovereigns. But, in 1659, the duke having been deprived of his states by the king of Sweden, the Dutch embraced this opportunity to assist in the work of spoliation, by compelling the Courlanders to give up Fort James, which they had constructed for the defence of their settlement in the Bay of Courland. The dominions of the duke were restored to him by the treaty of Oliva, but the States-General refusing to listen to his claims upon Tobago, he entered into a treaty with Charles the Second, by which he put himself under the protection of that monarch, and consented to hold the island of him, upon certain conditions.

Nothing, however, was ever done in consequence of this treaty, and the Lampsins remained in possession of the colony till the year 1677, unmolested, except in 1672, when Sir Tobias Bridges, with six ships from Barbadoes, laid Tobago under contribution. Hostilities

having broken out, between France and Holland, the Count D'Estrees, with a French squadron, appeared off Tobago, in March, 1677, and landed a body of troops, to assault the Dutch forts. While the troops were thus engaged, he bore down upon the Dutch fleet, under Admiral Binkes, which was at anchor in the bay. A terrible engagement ensued, in which each side lost several ships, and a great number of men, in consequence of a French vessel having taken fire, the flames from which were communicated to the ships of the Dutch. The advantage at the close of the naval battle was, however, on the side of the assailants. It was not so in the attempt upon the fort. The French were three times repulsed, and were at length compelled to desist, and re-embark. In December they returned with additional force, and besieged Fort Lampsins, the magazine of which being blown up by the third bomb that was thrown, nearly the whole of the works were ruined, and the besieged were, of course, compelled to surrender. Admiral Binkes perished by this explosion. The colony was evacuated by the Dutch on the 24th of December, and the island once more became an uninhabited desert, the French not choosing to establish themselves upon it. Thus was accomplished the ruin of this flourishing settlement, which, at the period when it was conquered, contained a population of twelve hundred opu-

lent, industrious and respectable inhabitants, who appear to have been governed, and to have acted towards each other, with a spirit of equity and kindness, which cannot too highly be praised.

Two feeble and fruitless attempts, shortly after the peace of Nimeguen, and in 1693, were made by the dukes of Courland, to procure colonists in England, for the purpose of resettling Tobago. The demise of the last of the dukes of the house of Kettler, which took place in 1737, put an end to all claims from that quarter. By the treaty of Aix la Chapelle, the island was specified as one of those which were to be considered as neutral; but, by the treaty of Paris, in 1763, Tobago, as well as St. Vincent's and Dominica, was given up in full sovereignty to the British crown. The English commenced the colonization of it in 1765, and so vigorously did they pursue their object that, in twelve years, the population was raised to twelve thousand persons. A further proof of their strenuous exertions is afforded by the quantity of produce which they shipped to the parent country. In the year 1770 their exports were little more than £2000; but in the year 1778 they had swelled to the sum of £95,284; their imports at the same time amounting to nearly £23,000.

Such was the flourishing state of the colony when, in 1781, it was attacked by the French, who had already wrested from us several of our

West-Indian islands. It was on the twenty-third of May that a small hostile squadron appeared off the island, having on board between two and three thousand men, under General Blanchelande. To oppose this force, Governor Ferguson had not more than four hundred and thirty men, of whom not one half were regular troops. Being foiled in their endeavours to land in Minister Bay, and also in Rockly Bay, the enemy stood round to the west of the island, and disembarked in Great Courland Bay. After having sent an express to Barbadoes for succour, the governor abandoned Scarborough, and retired with his scanty band to the post of Concordia. Some of the planters displayed, on this occasion, a truly British spirit. Mr. Collow fired his own canes to retard the march of the enemy, and Mr. Charles Low did the same with respect to his dwelling-house and other buildings. In order to deprive the governor of a part of his means of defence, M. Blanchelande issued a proclamation, threatening the planters with the plundering and confiscation of their estates, if they did not return to them within twenty-four hours. He likewise summoned the governor to surrender, offering, at the same time, to grant any terms which might be demanded. His threat and his summons were alike disregarded.

The obstinacy of the British leader induced M. Blanchelande to dispatch a cutter to Mar-

tinico, to require further reinforcements. He planned, in the meanwhile, a night attack upon the post of Concordia; but, the guides having misled his troops, it did not take place, and he now resolved to suspend his operations, till the arrival of additional numbers should insure his success. The governor, on his side, equally flattered himself with the hope of succour. He was apprized, on the thirtieth, that Admiral Drake was on his way from Barbadoes, with six sail of the line and three frigates, bringing 528 men, under General Skene. This aid had, however, been so tardily furnished, as to render it of no avail. The whole French fleet had had time to bear down from Martinico, and Admiral Drake was compelled by this superiority of force to relinquish the design of relieving Tobago.

M. Blanchelande was, of course, not subjected to the same kind of disappointment that Governor Ferguson had experienced. On the last day of May, the Marquis de Bouillé landed in Courland Bay, with about half the number of troops that were already on shore, and assumed the command of the whole united force.

The position of Concordia being too extensive to be any longer tenable, the governor, before day break on the morning of the first of June, silently withdrew to that of Caledonia, which is situated on a ridge, near the centre of the island, and is surrounded in such a manner

by impenetrable woods as to be almost inaccessible, except by a road six miles in length, and so narrow that two men cannot walk in it abreast. As soon as the Marquis de Bouillé was informed of this movement he pursued the British, but without effect, as they had gained the start of him by four miles. Exasperated at being thus foiled, he had recourse to a sort of warfare which was disgraceful to him as a man and a soldier, and formed a singular contrast with the mode of conduct which he had hitherto pursued in the West Indies. He ordered two plantations to be instantly reduced to ashes, and four more to undergo the same fate within four hours; and this act of barbarity was to be repeated, at a like interval of time, till the island should either be surrendered, or every vestige of cultivation be utterly destroyed.

With the intention of attacking the British post, the Marquis also endeavoured to induce two of the planters to act as guides to his troops. Highly to their honour, they steadily refused to lend him their assistance. Mr. Orr, though he was threatened with the burning of his house, and even with death, and though the plantations of his neighbours were in flames around him, could not be induced or intimidated to do more than to proceed to the British camp with an officer bearing a flag of truce. Mr. Turner, a proprietor of St. Vincent's, who was then applied

to, and whose whole property was at the mercy of the French, displayed the same noble firmness. He agreed to accompany the flag, and as nothing more could be gained, this was accepted; but, finding that along with the flag the marquis was attempting to push forward a body of troops, he peremptorily declined pointing out the road, and the French general was compelled to give up this part of his plan, and send his messenger alone.

The incendiary proceeding of the marquis was, however, productive of the desired effect. Willing as the planters were to resist, while there was a hope that resistance would be successful, it could scarcely be expected, or indeed wished, that they would hold out, when there seemed to be no probability that their sacrifices and efforts could have any other result than to involve themselves and their families in irretrievable ruin. It did not appear that there was the slightest chance of their receiving succour, they were nearly exhausted by fatigue, and had no covering from the inclemency of the weather, their property was consuming before their eyes, and they were completely surrounded by a formidable force, which consisted of veteran troops, and could be indefinitely augmented. It is, therefore, not to be wondered at that the militia now declared to the governor that they were resolved to lay down their arms. The governor did all in his power to change their resolution,

but his eloquence was exerted in vain. A capitulation was accordingly signed, on the evening of the first of June, and the French thereby became masters of Tobago. The terms must be owned to have been sufficiently favourable, especially if we take into account the deserted and desperate situation in which the colony was placed. The civil government, laws, customs and ordinances of the island were preserved untouched; property and religion were respected; the ports were allowed to be open to all ships for six months; and various other privileges were granted; doubtless with the view of gradually reconciling the colonists to the domination of France.

Sir George Rodney was the British admiral who then commanded in the West Indies, and considerable blame was attributed to him, for the loss of Tobago. It was urged, that he had neglected to avail himself of an excellent opportunity, not only of succouring the island, but also of destroying the small squadron by which the troops under M. Blanchelande had been landed. The voyage, it was said, from Tobago to Barbadoes and back, might be performed in less than half the time of that to Martinico and back; from Barbadoes it might be accomplished in twenty-four hours; and yet, though he was lying at Barbadoes with twenty-one sail of the line, and though intelligence of the invasion was trans-

mitted to him, 36 hours before M. Blanchelande wrote to Martinico for reinforcements, all that he had done was to send Admiral Drake with an inadequate squadron, instead of immediately sailing with his own, to rescue the colony from the hands of the French. Such was the language which was held in print by the governor, and it does not appear that the British admiral ever gave, in answer, any explanation whatever of the motives of his conduct. This silence was the more remarkable, as the manner in which Sir George Rodney's dispatch had spoken of the surrender of Tobago, had made it absolutely necessary for the governor to appeal to the public in his own defence.

By the treaty of 1783 Tobago was ceded to France. Few Frenchmen, however, established themselves there, and the original colonists, though they necessarily submitted to the ruling power, continued to cherish a strong attachment for the English government. On the breaking out of the revolutionary war, in 1793, Tobago was the first object of attack, and its inhabitants had the gratification of being again placed under the protection of the British crown. In the nine years of war which ensued, the small number of French settlers quitted the colony, and the plantations passed wholly into British hands. A large portion of capital was invested in this kind of property, and cultivation was carried on with

encreased vigour. Nothing occurred to disturb the quiet of the colony, except a conspiracy among some of the slaves towards the close of 1801, which was discovered and rendered abortive by the vigilance and spirit of Brigadier-general Carmichael. It was, therefore, with infinite grief and disappointment that, at the peace of Amiens, the colonists found themselves once more delivered up to a foreign power. Fortunately for them, the speedy renewal of hostilities released them from what they considered as a hateful bondage; and the last treaty of peace, by stipulating the cession of Tobago to this country, has effectually removed their fears of becoming once more unwilling subjects to the sovereign of France.

Tobago is divided into seven districts, called divisions; namely, North-East, Queen's Bay, Great River, Courland Bay, Barbadoes Bay, Rockly and Sandy Point divisions. It has an equal number of parishes, which are named St. Andrew's, St. George's, St. Mary's, St. Paul's, St. John's, St. David's and St. Patrick's; but there is no church on the island, and not more than one regular clergyman, who officiates on Sundays, in the great room of the assembly, at Scarborough. The population is widely and thinly scattered. There are only two towns, George Town and Scarborough, the latter of which is the capital, but neither of these towns

contain any thing that is worthy of particular notice.

TRINIDAD.

At the entrance of the Gulph of Paria, which it land-locks, and stretching from the mouths of the Orinoco to the mountains of Cumana, between the tenth and eleventh degrees of north latitude, and the sixty-first and sixty-third degrees of west longitude, is situated the island of Trinidad. Its extreme breadth, from east to west is between sixty and seventy miles, and fifty miles from north to south. From its peculiar shape, however, its general breadth is much greater from north to south than from east to west. In form it is compared by the Spaniards to an ox-hide; but, by a recent map, constructed from correct observations made by M. de Humboldt and M. Churucca, it appears rather to resemble a square, with a semicircular piece cut out of its western side, so as to make on that side an irregular crescent, one horn of which is turned towards the Orinoco, and the other to the peninsular extremity of the province of Cumana. Circumscribed by the main-land and island, lies the Gulph of Paria, which affords to vessels of every dimensions a secure shelter, and an excellent anchorage. The channel between the Orinoco and Trinidad is called the Serpent's Mouth; that between Trinidad and

Cape Paria in Cumana, is interspersed with islands, and bears the name of the Dragon's Mouth, which was given to it by Columbus. The name of Trinidad was also given to the island by that illustrious navigator, from the circumstance of three of the highest peaks of the mountains having first appeared to him, on his approach to the land.

The climate, though hot, is not unhealthy to those who do not indulge in excesses of various kinds. Aged persons are by no means uncommon in Trinidad, a convincing proof that it is not insalubrious. The mornings and evenings are pleasant, and the nights are delightfully cool and refreshing. The Charibean hurricanes it is entirely free from, and earthquakes are but slightly and unfrequently felt. From the beginning of November to the end of April, or the commencement of May, which interval of time is the spring season, scarcely any rain falls; but the soil is, nevertheless, refreshed by copious dews. The hot season sets in towards the close of April, and is at its height by the end of June. At this latter period the storms begin, and they gradually become more frequent till August, in which month, September, and the opening of October, they are of almost daily occurrence, and attended by torrents of rain. These storms last sometimes but for a few minutes, seldom half an hour; after which the air is calm, and the sky is clear.

In the night it hardly ever rains, but short and sudden showers, without thunder, fall about half an hour before the rising of the sun.

The manner in which the storms come on is too curious to be passed over without notice. At a moment when not a breath of wind is stirring, and the sky is of a brilliant and uniformly unstained azure, a small grey speck appears instantaneously in some part or other of the heavens, and in four or five minutes it swells into an enormous black cloud, from which dart faint flashes of lightning, that soon become more quick and vivid. The barometer rapidly sinks, the thunder bursts forth, a deluge of rain descends in ponderous drops, and the tempest then dies away as rapidly as it gathered, leaving the atmosphere in a state of perfect serenity, and of an unsullied blueness. This process is repeated perhaps fifteen or twenty times in the course of a day.

The quantity of rain which falls during the wet season may be estimated at not less than sixty-two inches; that which falls during the rest of the year, exc.. including the heavy dews, does not exceed eight or nine inches. The range of the thermometer, at the period of the greatest heats, is from seventy-eight to ninety degrees, above which latter point it very rarely ascends.

The mountains of Trinidad, though not diminutive, have not that towering loftiness which

distinguishes many of the cloud-capt eminences of the Charibean colonies, and they likewise differ from them in their geological construction. The principal chain runs across the north extremity of the island, in the direction of east and west, and appears, from various circumstances, to be a prolongation of the mountains which extend along the shores of Cumana, from which they were probably separated, at that unknown and distant epoch when the waters of the Guarapiche and of the western branches of the Orinoco opened themselves a passage to the sea, through the channel of the Dragon's Mouth. There is also a group of hills in the south, and another in the centre of Trinidad. One of the peaks of the latter group is called the mountain of Tamana, and is believed to be the most elevated in the island. These groups are covered with a variety of prickly shrubs, which renders it a difficult task to pass over them from the eastern to the western quarter. Among these hills are inexhaustible forests of timber, of various kinds, many of them incorruptible, and proper for shipbuilding and every other purpose.

Trinidad is abundantly provided with excellent harbours, among the principal of which are Chagaramus, Puerto d'Espana, and Naparima, all on the Gulph of Paria. Nor are the other coasts of the island destitute of ports, though they are not as numerous and extensive there as

on the western side. The gulph, and the coasts in general, swarm with fish of various kinds. In streams Trinidad abounds, there being no less than forty small ones, independent of several of a larger size, which are navigable, some of them to a considerable distance, and for vessels of a tolerable magnitude. The Caroni is the chief of the navigable streams which fall into the gulph. The Rio Grande and the Oropuche are those which have the superiority on the eastern side of the island. The streams on this side produce excellent oysters, which are found adhering to the trunk and branches of the mangrove, or rhizophora, a species of aquatic tree. A canal has been projected, to unite the Oropuche with the Caroni, and thus open an inland navigation, which would at once facilitate the settling of the interior, and save a tedious passage by sea round the northern shores.

The soil of Trinidad is deep and fertile. Unlike most of the Charibean isles, the cultivable space in this island is not narrowed into comparative insignificance, by the greatest part of the surface being covered with hills, which, though they may give beauty or sublimity to the scene, are barren of useful products. The mountains of Trinidad do not occupy more than a thirtieth part of the whole superficies, the remainder consisting of savannahs, or of vales, capable of being made productive of the most luxuriant crops.

From a survey taken in the year 1799, it appears that there is ample room in the island for the formation of 1,313 plantations of sugar-canes, 945 of coffee, 304 of cocoa, and 158 of cotton, each containing 320 English acres. Thus the number of estates which may be formed is little less than three thousand, and the number of tillable acres is not far short of nine hundred thousand. It has been remarked by a French writer, that more colonial produce may be raised upon this territory than was raised in the French portion of St. Domingo, before that colony was ruined by the breaking out of the revolutionary war

The natural productions of Trinidad are so abundant and beautiful that its first discoverers gave it the appellation of Paradise. The woods, as has already been stated, contain an inexhaustible variety of excellent timber, and are enlivened by many species of handsome birds, and by several sorts of game. Fruits of almost every kind grow profusely. The orange, the lemon, the citron, the anana, the vine, and a crowd of others, which it would be tedious to enumerate. On the shore of Coco Bay, on the eastern side of the island, is an extensive forest of cocoa-nut trees, which is believed to have been produced by the shipwreck of a vessel, laden with cocoa-nuts, in the year 1730, since which period the self-sown trees have progres-

sively multiplied to their present extent. Maize is cultivated with more than common success, and vegetables of different species are exceedingly good and in sufficient quantity.

But the most remarkable of all the productions of nature in this island, is undoubtedly the bituminous lake, which is situated on the western coast, near the village of La Brea. It is of a circular form, about three miles in circumference, and lies on ground elevated eighty feet above the level of the sea, from which it is separated only by a margin of forest. In some parts of it are diminutive islands, covered with plants and shrubs, and it is intersected by pools and rivulets of water. The face of the lake undergoes, however, frequent changes, so that a place where a verdant islet was one day seen, will the next day present nothing but a deep pool to the view. On the surface the bituminous matter is solid, though at the depth of a foot it has a degree of softness, and in some of the cavities petroleum is contained. The bitumen is not confined to this spot, for it may be found in a liquid state, in many parts of the woods, at a distance of twenty miles. Melted with tallow, the pitchy substance of the lake is now used at Trinidad for naval purposes.

The traces of former volcanic action are rendered obvious in the vicinity of La Brea, by the cinders and burnt earth which are every

where visible, and the hot springs which exist in several places. The formation of the bitumen is still going on in the bowels of the earth. Not far from Cape Brea there is, at the bottom of the sea, a sort of crater, which at times agitates the superincumbent waves, and throws up a considerable quantity of petroleum. There is another crater, of the same kind, in the Bay of Mayaro, on the opposite side of the island. In the months of March and June, of each year, explosions are heard from it, which are followed by flames and smoke, bursting through the sea, and, some minutes after, fragments of bitumen, black and shining like jet, are floated to the shore. Another indication that subterraneous processes are yet continued, is furnished by two argillaceous hills, or rather hillocks, in the neighbourhood of Point Icacos, which bear a close resemblance to the mud volcanoes in South America, of which a description has been given by M. de Humboldt. They occasionally detonate, and are covered with small cones, which continually emit a fetid gas. From one of the cones constantly rises a whitish matter, which has an aluminous taste. The summit of one of the hills has a shallow crater, which is filled with water in a state of ebullition.

The principal exportable produce of Trinidad consists of sugar, rum, coffee, indigo, cotton and cocoa. The cocoa of this island was always

celebrated for its excellent quality, being considered as superior even to that of Caracas. In the year 1727, however, the trees were greatly injured by the severity of the north wind; a disaster which the priests did not fail to represent as a judgment upon the inhabitants, for their enormous wickedness in refusing the payment of tithes. It is laughable, and at the same time painful, to observe the undoubting credulity with which, in his Geographical Dictionary of America and the West Indies, Alcedo relates this ridiculous monkish story. "The production of the greatest value in this island," says he, "is the cocoa, which, from its fine quality, is every where in request, in preference to that of Caracas; and the crops were even bought up before they were gathered, so that the persons to whom they belonged refused to pay their tenths to the clergy, and strange to say, that, as it should seem, Heaven in chastisement of their covetousness, had entirely deprived them of this means of emolument, inasmuch as, since the year 1727, the whole of their crops have turned out fruitless and barren, with the exception of one that belonged to a certain person, by name Rabelly, who had continued to pay his tithes, and whose estate is the only one in which that production is now furnished." Unfortunately for the theory of the monks, and the faith of Alcedo, the crops of

cocoa have been exuberant since Trinidad has been cultivated by heretical proprietors, and governed by an heretical sovereign.

The island of Trinidad was discovered by Columbus, on the 31st of July, 1498. He was drawn by the force of the currents, caused by the descending waters of the Orinoco, into the Gulph of Paria, which, it is said, he called Golfo Triste, from his having at first despaired of finding an outlet, and consequently believed that his labour was entirely lost. He, however, at length, found egress through the channels on the north, to which he gave the name of the Dragon's Mouths. It was not till 1588 that the Spaniards attempted to establish any settlement. Their conduct to the natives was marked by the same barbarity that blackened all their early proceedings in the new world. Those of the unhappy islanders who were not exterminated were doomed to exhaust their lives in the mines; a death more cruel, because more lingering, than that by the sword. On his voyage to Guyana, in 1595, in search of the fatal delusion of El Dorado, or the Golden City, Sir Walter Raleigh attacked this island, made himself master of St. Joseph's, and took prisoner the governor, Don Antonio Berreo, whom he represents as an execrable tyrant, and, though of illustrious birth, so exceedingly ignorant, that he knew not the west from the east. The island was denominated Cairi by the natives,

and Raleigh describes it as being fertile, and producing excellent sugar and tobacco, and he adds that gold was said to be found in the sand of its rivers. With respect to the latter point, however, he was certainly misinformed.

For nearly two centuries, the natural resources of the island were almost wholly neglected, and the colony remained, of course, in a languid and useless state. Previously to the year 1783, a single vessel, belonging to a Dutch house in St. Eustatia, and making annually two or three voyages, was sufficient to carry on the whole of the commerce of Trinidad. For the various articles of which, in their vegetative kind of existence, the inhabitants stood in need, they bartered their scanty produce of cocoa, vanilla, indigo, maize and cotton. The population, up to this comparatively recent period, consisted of only 2,763 persons, of whom 2,032 were Indians; men to whom toilsome occupations were hateful, and who, in consequence, were not likely to be of much avail in fertilizing and enriching the country.

A. M. Roume de St. Laurent, an inhabitant of Grenada, is said to have been the person through whose intervention Trinidad was roused from its disgraceful torpor. Induced by his taste for natural history, and perhaps by other motives of a more gainful kind, M. de St. Laurent visited the island, early in 1783, and was so charmed by

its fertility, and its advantageous situation for both military and commercial purposes, that he hastened to Madrid, with the view of turning towards it the serious attention of the Spanish cabinet. He was successful in his efforts. By an order of the council of the Indies, published in 1783, all foreigners, professing the Roman catholic religion, were invited to settle themselves in the colony, and numerous advantages were allowed to those who accepted this invitation. So eager was the council to attain its object, that it even threw its protecting shield over every kind of mercantile fraud and baseness. It secured, during the space of five years, all new settlers from being sued or molested for debts which they had contracted in the countries whence they came. This curious and certainly immoral privilege had the desired effect. It brought to Trinidad a number of men who had enriched themselves at the expense of their honesty, and of the property of their creditors or employers, and who were delighted to find a place of refuge, where they might enjoy at their ease the spoils which they had acquired. At the same time, the council invited foreign merchants to open a trade, and it removed most of the obstacles which had hitherto been opposed to them, and rendered those which remained rather nominal than real.

The exertions of M. de St. Laurent, in behalf of the colony, were not less active, as far as his

influence extended. With the view of prevailing on the great mercantile houses to make advances to the colonists, he visited, at his own expence, the principal commercial cities of France and Spain, and by his animating statement of the fortune which might be realized, he induced many persons of considerable property to become proprietors in Trinidad.

The island, however, was still more indebted for its prosperity to the wisdom and activity of its governor, Don Joseph Chacon. It was not one of his least beneficial acts, that he prevented the introduction of that detestable tribunal the inquisition, and that, as far as lay in his power, he discouraged the lazy, libertine and intolerant fraternity of monks. He received foreigners with distinguished kindness, afforded every assistance and security to their speculations, and extended the freedom of commerce to the utmost possible bounds. All who were disposed to settle, were presented with grants of fertile land, and even with assistance from the public treasury, to enable them to purchase the necessary stock of cattle and agricultural implements.

Under the enlightened government of Don Joseph Chacon, the colony rapidly attained to a flourishing situation. Discordant in habits and opinions, as the colonists necessarily were, he kept them in a state of peace and order, by a due mixture of mildness and firmness. Between

the years 1787 and 1791, a handsome and considerable town arose in a spot which shortly before had contained nothing but a few thatched huts, belonging to fishermen. This was the town of Puerto de Espana. The disturbances which now broke out in the French colonies also contributed greatly to the benefit of Trinidad. Many planters from St. Domingo, Martinico, Guadaloupe and St. Lucia, took shelter here to avoid the disgusting spectacle of factious rage, or to escape from the persecuting rancour of their enemies; and their number was still further increased, after the breaking out of the contest between England and France. However opposite might be their political sentiments, they were all received with equal kindness by the governor, and were encouraged to become valuable subjects of the Spanish monarch.

But subjects of the Spanish monarch the colonists were not much longer to remain. In 1797, Trinidad, as already has been narrated, fell an unresisting conquest to an army under Sir Ralph Abercromby. It was ceded by the Spaniards at the peace of Amiens, and has since continued in the possession of the British, without experiencing any of the vicissitudes or sufferings of war. In 1806, a conspiracy of the negroes was fortunately discovered before it could be carried into effect, and the principal conspirators received the punishment which was due to

their crime. The disputes which, since the cession of the island, have at times taken place, respecting local concerns, are not of sufficiently general interest to entitle them to claim a place in this brief sketch of the history of the island.

The scantiness of the population previous to the year 1783, has been noticed in a preceding paragraph. Since that year, however, the increase has been astonishingly rapid. In only six years after the issuing of the order of the council of the Indies, the number of persons on the island had swelled to no less than 10,422, which, at the period of the conquest by Sir Ralph Abercromby, had further risen to 18,627. Nor did it stop here. On the contrary it shewed evident signs of the strong impulse which was given by English industry and capital. In 1805 it was 25,245, and at the time of the last official returns, in 1811, it appears to have been 32,664. The majority of the whites are British, and the French and Spaniards rank next in order. No population can possibly be of a more motley kind than that of Trinidad, which is composed of individuals of fourteen nations. An attempt, some years ago, was made to introduce Chinese labourers, but it entirely failed, and there are, at this moment, few if any of them remaining.

The consequent increase of colonial produce has, of course, been equally great. The first sugar-work was established on the island, in 1787,

by M. Picot de la Perouse. In 1797, there were one hundred and fifty-nine works, which produced 83,571 cwts. of sugar. In 1816 there were exported to the United Kingdom alone 157,731 cwts. of sugar; and it is probable that a very considerable portion was sent to the British northern colonies, the American states, and other quarters. Into some of the sugar-works the steam-engine has been introduced, to abridge the more expensive labour of oxen and mules. The cultivation of coffee, cotton, indigo and cocoa appears to be carried on with spirit and success.

The nominal capital of the island is St. Joseph d'Orana, which, however, is nothing more than a kind of village, consisting of about three hundred meanly built houses. It is situated in a fertile and cultivated plain. The real capital, and the residence of the governor, is Puerto de Espana, the origin of which has already been stated, and which stands on the shore, about eight miles from St. Joseph's. On the night of the 24th of April, 1808, this town, in point of size the second in the Windward Islands, was laid nearly level with the ground by a dreadful conflagration. Four hundred and thirty five dwelling houses, besides four times the number of back stores and out-offices, were entirely destroyed. Not one of the public buildings was saved. By this tremendous calamity four thou-

five hundred persons were left without a home, and sustained a loss which was estimated at little short of a million sterling. Fortunately only two persons perished, one of whom was a grenadier, who fell a victim to his humanity, in rescuing an infant from the flames. He effected his benevolent purpose, but was scorched in such a manner that he speedily expired.

Since this event, the town has been rebuilt with stone, upon a regular plan, and it seems probable that, in magnitude and beauty, it will one day be without a rival in that quarter. New towns are also planned, or actually rising into existence, in various parts of the island, particularly at St. Joseph's, St. Juan, St. Fernando, and Naparima.

HISTORY

OF THE

ABOLITION OF THE SLAVE TRADE.

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ABOLITION OF THE SLAVE TRADE.

CHAPTER I.

Introduction.—Slave Trade early censured by great characters.—Opponents of it at a subsequent period.—Opinion of Yorke and Talbot.—Exertions of Mr. Granville Sharp in opposition to it.—Laudable exertions of the Quakers to discourage the traffic.—Circumstance which occasioned Mr. Clarkson to embark in the cause.—A committee formed of the enemies to the trade, in order to bring about its abolition.—Active exertions of Mr. Clarkson and of the committee.—The Privy Council ordered to inquire into the trade.—The subject introduced into Parliament.—Slave carrying bill passed.

AMONG the many momentous subjects connected with the well-being of colonies, which, since the remote period when such establishments were first formed, have arisen to claim the serious attention of the legislature and of the people, that which undoubtedly stands pre-eminent in point

of magnitude is the struggle which was, for nearly twenty years, perseveringly supported in order to bring about the abolition of the traffic in slaves. The vast amount of property involved in the decision, the very existence of which property seemed to be put to the hazard; the violent feelings and passions naturally roused in the bosoms of its numerous possessors, by the critical situation in which it appeared to stand; the almost daily and hourly renewal of charge, and defence, and recrimination; the consequent vehemence and bitterness of language on both sides; the apparently interminable nature of the discussion; the splendid talent and high dignity of many of those who were most actively engaged in the cause; the grandeur of the tribunal which sat in judgment; and the breathless anxiety displayed by every class of the community; all conspired to give to the contest a paramount importance, and to fix upon it the gaze not only of the British empire, but in some measure of the whole civilized world. In this country there was no neutrality. The poet, the dramatist, the orator, the philosopher, the moralist, the divine, all rushed forward to bear a part, with an unanimity and eagerness which have scarcely a parallel in the records of our history. Even those persons who had no literary or conversational talents, and no influence from fortune or rank, nevertheless lent their aid, by submitting cheerfully to the privation

of articles which custom has rendered rather articles of absolute necessity than of mere luxury. By what means, and by whom, this universal ardour was excited, now remains to be shown.

The rise and progress of the slave trade have already been described in the second, third and fourth chapters of the second volume. The present chapters are dedicated to a narrative of its decline and fall. The traffic had yet scarcely grown beyond its feeblest infancy before many great and wise characters set their faces against it, as being a gross violation of every principle of justice. Cardinal Ximenes refused his assent to a proposal which was made to him, to transport slaves to America; Charles the Fifth in his maturer wisdom abolished the trade, after having been long friendly to it; Leo the Tenth declared that "not only the Christian religion, but that nature itself cried out against slavery;" Queen Elizabeth stigmatized the kidnapping of the Africans as "a detestable act, which would call down the vengeance of Heaven upon the undertakers;" and even the weak and cold-hearted Lewis the Thirteenth could be prevailed upon to sanction the practice only by his being told, that its victims would thus enjoy the precious advantage of conversion to the Christian faith.

As, however, the colonies grew, so grew the trade. It did indeed "grow with their growth, and strengthen with their strength." In the course

of time, too, like many other grievances, it acquired a sort of prescriptive right to a continuance of its existence. The great bulk of the people seldom turned their thoughts to it, and when they did think of it, they considered it either as a legitimate branch of traffic, or at worst as a necessary evil, and a venial offence. The idea of it was huddled up in their minds with the general idea of trade, and thus the kidnapping and selling of negroes was placed on precisely the same footing with the regular mercantile dealings in rice, cotton, pepper, indigo and dye-woods.

From time to time, however, men of benevolence and talent publicly entered their protest against the wickedness of the practice. The first names on record are those of Morgan Godwin, a clergyman of the established church, Richard Baxter, the celebrated non-conformist divine, George Fox, the founder of the society of Friends or Quakers, and his fellow-traveller, William Edmundson. These opponents of the slave trade were succeeded at various intervals, during the course of a century, by others equally hostile to it, among whom may be enumerated Montesquieu, Hutcheson, Burke, Sterne, Warburton, Dr. Beattie, John Wesley, George Whitfield, Adam Smith, Professor Millar, Dr. Robertson, Dr. Paley, the Abbé Raynal, M. Necker, Dr. Porteous, and numbers more. One of the last prose writers on this subject, previous to the

great contest, was the Reverend James Ramsay, vicar of Teston, in Kent, who, having resided nineteen years in St. Christopher's, was thoroughly informed on every point, and who exerted himself, through the medium of the press, with an equal degree of ability and perseverance. The poetical writers also were honourably active. Pope, Thomson, Savage, Shenstone, Dyer, Day and Cowper, all deprecated, and stigmatized in glowing language, the wrongs which were inflicted upon the suffering natives of Africa.

One other Englishman, and he among the most distinguished and effective, yet remains to be mentioned. This is Mr. Granville Sharp. The part which he took was early and decided, and his exertions eminently tended to attract the public notice to the question of slavery. His talents were first called into action in the following manner. It had, for many years, been a prevailing belief, that a slave coming to England, and receiving baptism, became thereby free. Many Africans who had been brought to England, availed themselves of this supposed privilege, and set their masters at defiance. At length, in 1729, the merchants and planters drew up a case, for the opinion of Yorke and Talbot, who then held the offices of attorney and solicitor-general. These two lawyers decided in a truly lawyer-like spirit. Their righteous judgment deserves to be recorded. "We are of opinion,"

said they, "that a slave by coming from the West Indies into Great Britain, or Ireland, either with or without his master, does not become free, and that his master's right and property in him is not thereby determined or varied, and that baptism does not bestow freedom upon him, nor make any alteration in his temporal condition in these kingdoms. We are also of opinion, that the master may legally compel him to return again to the plantations."

Thus armed, the planters who chanced to be residing in England no longer scrupled to advertise their slaves for sale, along with horses, carriages, and other articles, to offer rewards for apprehending them as runaways whenever they absconded, to seize them in the streets, and to drag them by violence to the ships which were to transport them to the colonies. So much on a level with beasts were the negroes considered to be, "that persons in no wise concerned with them began to institute a trade in their persons, making agreements with captains of ships going to the West Indies to put them on board at a certain price."

The legal or rather illegal opinion of Yorke and Talbot continued to be acted upon till 1765, a period of nearly forty years, when a circumstance occurred, by which its malignant operation was eventually annihilated. A man, of the name of Lisle, brought over from Barbadoes one

Jonathan Strong, an African slave, whom he used in such a barbarous manner, particularly by beating him over the head with a pistol, that the unfortunate victim was first attacked by a disorder in his eyes, which threatened to deprive him of sight, and next by an ague and fever, and a lameness in both his legs. Having thus become useless as a domestic, he was turned adrift, in this deplorable situation, to beg, steal, starve, or die. He was, however, restored to health by Mr. William Sharp, the brother of Mr. Granville Sharp, and the latter supplied him with money, and procured for him a place.

Strong was now become healthy, robust and happy. While he was thus situated, the humane Lisle chanced to meet him, and, as Strong was again able to bear toil and ill-usage, his master laudably determined that he should have his accustomed share of them. He, therefore, employed two men to kidnap him, and carry him, without a warrant, to the Poultry compter, where he sold him for thirty pounds to a man of the name of Kerr. In this emergency, Strong applied to Mr. Granville Sharp, who pleaded his cause before the Lord Mayor, and, notwithstanding the arguments of some lawyers, who quoted Yorke and Talbot, his lordship discharged the negro, on the ground, however, that he had been taken without a warrant. A West India captain, who was in readiness to convey Strong abroad,

then seized him as his slave; but, on Mr. Sharp threatening to prosecute him for an assault, he relinquished the negro, who was carried away in triumph by his advocate. An action, for depriving him of his property, was then commenced by Kerr against Mr. Sharp, which, after a lapse of two years, was decided in favour of the defendant, with treble costs.

Being dissatisfied with an opinion which he obtained from Doctor, afterwards Judge, Blackstone, Mr. Sharp devoted two or three years to a close study of the principles of English law. The result was the publishing, in 1769, of a book, which had for some time previously been circulated in manuscript, under the title of "A representation of the injustice and dangerous tendency of tolerating slavery in England." To the authority of Yorke and Talbot he opposed that of Lord Chief-justice Holt, who had determined that every slave coming into England became free. But he did not content himself with opposing one opinion to another. He established his doctrine by a profound inquiry into the principles of villenage, and by a reference to the constitutional axiom "that every man in England was free to sue and defend his rights, and that force could not be used without a legal process."

Several cases soon occurred, in which negroes were rescued from those who were on the point of forcibly carrying them back to slavery. Ver-

dicts of juries were, in some instances, given in their favour. Still, no case had yet been decided on the broad ground, "whether an African slave coming into England became free." To put the question for ever at rest, Mr. Sharp resolved that the famous case of Somerset, which was the last, should be argued upon this basis. Lord Mansfield, too, who was naturally somewhat biassed by the opinion of Yorke and Talbot, and who began to be doubtful what course to steer, was equally anxious that the law should be finally ascertained. The most distinguished counsel at the bar were employed on this occasion. On the side of freedom were Davy, Alleyne, Mansfield, Glynn and Hargrave. Three different sittings, in January, February and May, 1772, were occupied in this important discussion. The decision was finally pronounced on the 22d of June, by Lord Mansfield, in the name of the whole of the bench, and it fully established the great fact, that slavery could not exist upon the soil of England.

Mr. Sharp did not slacken in his laudable exertions, in behalf of the negroes, though there was little hope that his future labours would be rewarded like his past. He endeavoured to impress on the ministry of that period the cruelty and unlawfulness of making slaves, and he continued to write upon the subject, and to stimulate others by his correspondence and example. In

1783, he had an opportunity of producing a considerable effect upon the public mind, by making fully and extensively known the circumstances of an atrocious transaction, which had taken place on board the Zong slave-ship of Liverpool, commanded by Captain Collingwood. This transaction was the murder of a hundred and thirty-two slaves, who, being sickly, were thrown into the sea, by order of the captain, to enable his owners to claim the value of them from the underwriters, which could not have been done had the victims died a natural death. The pretext for this cold-blooded massacre was want of water, a pretext which was disproved by evidence. The underwriters resisted the claim upon them, and, the matter being brought to trial, Mr. Sharp employed a short-hand writer, to take down the proceedings, which he afterwards procured to be printed and widely circulated. Copies were sent to the Lords of the Admiralty, and to the Duke of Portland, but they remained unnoticed.

The attention of Parliament was thrice called to the slave trade, but the time was not yet come for its being aroused. In the year 1776, David Hartley, the son of Dr. Hartley, made a motion, which was seconded by Sir George Saville, "that the slave trade was contrary to the laws of God, and the rights of men." His motion failed. Nothing more was said upon the subject in the senate till June, 1783, when a bill having been

introduced to regulate the African trade, the society of Quakers drew up a petition against the traffic in human beings, and prayed that the practice of it might be abolished. It was presented by Sir Cecil Wray, and spoken of with respect by Lord North, who, however, intimated that the continuance of the traffic was now become necessary to every nation in Europe. A petition was also sent up, in the following year, from Bridgewater, and was suffered to lie upon the table, but was beheld with something very nearly approaching to dislike, as proposing a measure which, if adopted, could not fail to be the ruin of the West Indian colonies.

From what has been stated, respecting the sentiments of George Fox, and the first petition to parliament, it will readily be concluded that the slave trade was held in abhorrence by the whole body of Friends or Quakers. They were, in reality, unanimous on this question, both in England and America, and they omitted no opportunity of giving effect to the principles which they maintained. In England, as early as the year 1727, they passed a resolution, censuring the importation of negroes; in 1758 a still stronger one; in 1768 they disowned any member who might be found guilty of the practice; and in 1763 they endeavoured to prevent any assistance whatever from being afforded towards the carrying of it on. The petition followed next

in succession. They then actively distributed tracts and essays, particularly among the rising generation, and formed a committee consisting of six members, to take such measures as might be conducive to the attainment of their object. The six members were William Dillwyn, George Harrison, Samuel Hoare, Dr. Thomas Knowles, John Lloyd, and Joseph Woods. By this committee various books were printed, and articles were regularly inserted in many of the London and provincial journals. Its existence, however, was unknown to the public in general.

Nearly the same course was pursued by the Quakers of America. They first discouraged the traffic, next censured it, then disowned those who had any concern in it, and, lastly, restored to liberty the slaves of whom they were themselves possessors. Several of them took an active literary part in the cause of the Africans. The earliest of those who thus aided were William Burling, Ralph Sandiford and Benjamin Lay. To these succeeded John Woolman, who exerted himself with equal zeal and effect. But the most distinguished of all the advocates of the Africans was Anthony Benezet, a man of liberal education, who was the son of a French protestant refugee. Early in life, instead of engaging in mercantile pursuits, to which he had been brought up, and in which he had the fairest prospect of success, Benezet chose the profession of a schoolmaster,

as being that in which he could be the most diffusively useful to his fellow-creatures. His courtesy, uprightness and benevolence, gave him in time a wide influence, which he uniformly used for the benefit of others. To slavery he was a determined enemy, and he taught his scholars to participate in his own detestation of it. He likewise published many works on slavery and the slave trade, among which was the far-circulated "Historical Account of Guinea;" and he carried on an extensive correspondence with persons whose sentiments were in unison with his own. It is almost needless to say that one of these correspondents was Mr. Granville Sharp. It was the decision on the Somerset case that brought them to the knowledge of each other. Among the measures which Benezet adopted, in favour of the Africans, was that of writing to the queen a pathetic letter, accompanied by several tracts, intreating her to turn her attention to the sufferings of those for whom he pleaded, and to interpose her endeavours in their behalf. This letter was written in 1783, and was received with marks of kindness. One of the last acts of his life was the establishment of a school for educating negroes, to the support of which he bequeathed the small fortune that his industry had acquired. In the spring of the year 1784, a short illness put an end to the benevolent career of Benezet. He died at Philadelphia, and his re-

mains were attended to the grave by many thousands of sincere mourners, of all ranks, professions and parties. No happier fate can be wished to man, than to be thus loved and honoured in life, and thus lamented in death.

The doctrines held, and the examples given, by the Quakers were not without their effect on persons of other religious persuasions. They induced many to treat their slaves with more kindness, and some to bear an active part in labouring to put an end to the traffic in slaves. In the year 1772 the Virginia House of Burgesses even went so far as to petition his Majesty to remove such restraints upon the governors of the colony as inhibited their assenting to laws designed to check "that inhuman and impolitic commerce, the slave trade." In Pennsylvania, in the year 1774, a society was established by the exertions of James Pemberton, a Quaker, and Dr. Rush, the object of which was to promote the abolition of slavery, and the relief of free negroes unlawfully held in bondage. The operations of this society were checked by the breaking out of the war; but, on the return of peace, it became so popular that, in 1787, it was considerably enlarged, and Dr. Franklin was appointed the president. This event was speedily followed by the formation of similar societies, comprising persons of all religious classes, in New York, Connecticut, New Jersey, Delaware,

Maryland, and other states of the American union. A mutual intercourse was kept up between these societies; the leading members of which also held an active correspondence with such individuals in England as were friendly to the cause. It was in England, fortunately for her character, that decisive measures had, at length, their origin.

It is a trite observation, which, however, strongly applies in the present case, that great events often spring from the most trifling causes. Notwithstanding the zeal and numbers of those who have been mentioned as hostile to the commerce in human beings, there was still something wanting to give the last impulse and the proper direction to their efforts, and the slave trade would, therefore, in all human probability, have gone on for many years, censured indeed by the moralist and philanthropist, but unexposed to any formidable danger, had not the vice-chancellor of the university of Cambridge chosen a short Latin question, as the subject of the prize dissertations for the year 1785. The vice-chancellor was Dr. Peckard, the master of Magdalen College, and a warm and enlightened friend of civil and religious liberty. In 1784 he preached a sermon before the university, in the course of which he introduced a strenuous protest against the slave trade, as being a barbarous and inhuman traffic, a monstrous iniquity, which, sooner

or later, would be punished by the heaviest judgment of a just and angry Deity. When, in the ensuing year, he became vice-chancellor, he thought it his duty to bring the trade under discussion; and, accordingly, availing himself of his office, he gave out, as a thesis for the senior bachelors of arts, the question "Anne liceat invitos in servitutem dare?" or, Is it right to make slaves of others against their will?

Among the senior bachelors, who that year were qualified to write for the prize, was Mr. Clarkson. He had gained the first prize in the preceding year, and was, therefore, anxious to maintain his supremacy in the present contest for literary honours. His natural feelings of right, strengthened by the conviction which Dr. Peckard's sermon had produced, led him to stand forth as the determined enemy of the trade. As yet, however, he had no documents to assist him, and but a few weeks were allowed to complete the composition. To obtain a knowledge of facts, he resorted to the papers of a deceased friend, who had been in the trade, and to several officers who had been in the West Indies; but the great source of his information was Anthony Benezet's Historical Account of Guinea, of which he fortunately saw an advertisement, and which he hastened to the metropolis, for the purpose of procuring.

At the commencement of his labours, literary

reputation was the primary object of Mr Clarkson, and he anticipated nothing but pleasure from the task of marshalling his arguments, and polishing his periods. When, however, he came to examine the facts, the desire of literary fame was lost in a more noble and powerful feeling, that of a wish to benefit the oppressed, and his task was rendered painful by the horrible nature of the scenes on which his mind was forced to dwell. "It was," says he, in his narrative, "but one gloomy subject from morning till night. In the day time I was uneasy. In the night I had little rest. I sometimes never closed my eye-lids for grief." So bent was he upon the performance of what he now considered as a duty, that he never slept but with a candle in his room, that he might instantly commit to paper the thoughts which occurred to him in silence and solitude. The essay was, at length, finished, and, being honoured with the first prize, was publicly read by its author, in the Senate-house, at Cambridge.

From this period the slave trade was the perpetually-recurring subject of Mr. Clarkson's meditations. Through the summer and autumn of 1785, it haunted him by day and by night, and he frequently retired to walk in the woods, that he might reflect upon it undisturbed. Every time that he thought on it was with added grief. He felt that something ought to be done in behalf of the Africans, and he envied those who had

the power of acting, by means of their seats in Parliament, or their great riches and extensive connections. At the same time he was almost hopeless of accomplishing any thing by his own efforts; and he also feared that, at the age of four-and-twenty, and unacquainted with the world, were he to exert himself conspicuously on this occasion, he would be considered as Quixotic, perhaps even as insane. He resolved, however, at least to translate his Latin dissertation, enlarge it usefully, and try what effect it would produce on the mind of the public.

While he was in London with this view, and after he had been discouraged by one bookseller, he accidentally met with a Quaker friend, who enquired the reason why he had not printed his Essay, and informed him, that some members of his persuasion were anxious to find him out. This casual meeting procured him an introduction, in the first place, to James Phillips and William Dillwyn, and, shortly after, to Richard Phillips, Mr. Granville Sharp and Mr. Ramsay. He was now pleasingly surprised to find that there was a committee established in England, and a society in America, and he began to conceive hopes that the great object of his wishes might be attained, and that he might have the happiness of being instrumental in its attainment. Thus encouraged, he published his Prize Essay, which was ushered into the world in June, 1796.

one year after it had been read at Cambridge in its original form.

The Essay he now distributed in every quarter where there was a probability that it would produce a beneficial effect; and his success far outran his expectations. The pious and benevolent Bennet Langton, Lord and Lady Scarsdale, Dr. Baker, Sir Charles and Lady Middleton, Sir Herbert Mackworth, Lord Newhaven, Lord Balgonie, Lord Hawke, Bishop Porteous, and many others, took a warm interest in the subject, and promised that their utmost exertions should not be wanting. Animated by this happy beginning of his labours, Mr. Clarkson, in a moment of noble enthusiasm, gave to his friends a solemn pledge that he would devote himself to the cause, to the complete abandonment of every other pursuit. He had, at this time, flattering prospects of rising in the church, the relinquishing of which would, he knew, give dissatisfaction to his family, and he knew, too, that the task which he had undertaken would be one of incessant toil, and of doubtful issue; yet, on a calm consideration of the whole, he resolved, at whatever risk or sacrifice, to abide by the pledge which he had given.

Nor was Mr. Clarkson occupied only in the distribution of his Essay. He had also to make the necessary enquiries respecting the mode in which the slave traffic was conducted. In this

he was offered every assistance which Sir Charles Middleton, as comptroller of the navy, could give to him. From vessels which traded to Africa he procured specimens of the produce and manufactures of the country, in order to prove that a more gainful and honourable commerce might be carried on with it than that of human beings. He likewise visited slave ships, and obtained access to the records of the Custom-houses of London and Liverpool, and to such individuals as were capable of giving information as to the state of the West Indies and of the African continent. Two important facts he thus ascertained; namely, that at least one-fifth, and probably one-half, of the seamen engaged in the slave trade perished in that unhealthy employment, and that, in the colonies, a mild and prudent treatment of the slaves would so increase their numbers, as to prevent the necessity of further importations.

It had, from the beginning, been a main object with Mr. Clarkson to interest in the cause those who had the power of directing to it the attention of the legislature. That object he now attained. Sir Richard Hill, Mr. Powis, Mr. Windham, Mr Hawkins Browne, and other members of the House of Commons, declared themselves hostile to the trade. But first among the first was Mr. Wilberforce, who, having carefully examined the evidence, pledged himself to bring forward the question in Parliament, if no

person more proper could be found. His subsequent unwearied zeal and labours fully proved that no one could be more worthy of this honourable task.

The business being thus far advanced, it was resolved to form a more extensive committee, consisting of twelve persons, at the head of whom was Mr. Granville Sharp. It met, for the first time, on the 22d of May, 1787. The title which it should assume became necessarily a subject of discussion. After mature deliberation, it was thought, for more than one reason, imprudent to aim at accomplishing too much. There were two evils, which it was desirable to remove, namely, slavery and the traffic in slaves; but, as it was improbable that more than one of these could be attacked with success, it behoved the committee to make a prudent choice with respect to their object. It was finally determined that the committee should not meddle with the state of slavery, as it then existed, but that it should confine its efforts to bringing about the abolition of the slave trade, and that it should be named accordingly. This decision was, undoubtedly, a proof of wisdom.

The next step was to collect information to as great an extent as was possible, from the ports which might be termed the head-quarters of the trade. With this view, Mr. Clarkson visited Bristol and Liverpool, and, in spite of numerous

obstacles, and no small personal danger, he ascertained a variety of important facts, and drew together such a mass of evidence as he had scarcely hoped to find. All that he had heard or read, relative to the base and cruel mode of kidnapping the slaves, and the sufferings which they had to endure on their passage to the West Indies, was incontrovertibly established, by the testimony of a crowd of witnesses. He purchased the hand-cuffs and the leg-bolts for linking the slaves two by two, the thumb-screws for torturing them, and the instrument for wrenching open the mouths of those who refused to eat; and he measured the dimensions of the slave vessels, and discovered that, in many instances, the wretched victims were stowed into so narrow a space, that they must sit down during the whole of the voyage, and that each of them must contract his limbs within the scanty limits of three square feet. He procured proof, too, that the misery of the traffic was not confined to the Africans; for, that the seamen employed in the navigation were entrapped into the service by the most infamous arts; that they were defrauded, ill-treated, and even murdered, with impunity; and that the mortality among them was so enormous as almost to stagger belief. At the same time, as he had before done, he diligently sought for specimens of African produce, to show the possibility of carrying on with Africa an innocent

and beneficial intercourse. In this search he was exceedingly successful, having gathered samples of many articles, which were both useful and beautiful. Before his return to the metropolis, he travelled to Bath, Bridgewater, Monmouth, Chester, Worcester, and other places of note, secured several friends to the cause, and among them the editors of some provincial papers; obtained the promise of petitions to the legislature; and laid the foundation of committees to co-operate with that which was established in London. Throughout this journey his toil was incessant, and the difficulties with which he had to encounter would have discouraged a mind less strong and enthusiastic than his own. Such were the fears of those who were acquainted with the facts which he wished to know, that, in many cases, not a tittle of evidence could be extracted without much perseverance and persuasion.

The committee, meanwhile, had not been idle. It had increased its number, opened a correspondence with the American societies, distributed several thousands of circular letters and tracts, and received offers of assistance from a host of respectable and distinguished individuals, in all parts of the kingdom, and even in France. Every day brought fresh information and fresh allies; and, though most of the members were engaged in commercial or other pursuits, they

were uniformly at their posts at the periods which were appointed for their meeting.

By the commencement of 1788, these exertions had produced so much effect, that the public voice was loudly raised against the continuance of the trade. Thirty-five petitions were on the table of the House of Commons by the middle of February, and many more were expected to follow them. In this state of things, and considering the magnitude of the interests which were at stake, the government deemed it proper to institute an enquiry into the subject. By an order of council, of the 11th of February, the king directed that a committee of privy council should sit as a board of trade, "to take into their consideration the present state of the African trade, particularly as far as related to the practice and manner of purchasing or obtaining slaves on the coast of Africa, and the importation and sale thereof, either in the British colonies and settlements, or in the foreign colonies and settlements in America or the West Indies; and also as far as related to the effects and consequences of the trade both in Africa and in the said colonies and settlements, and to the general commerce of this kingdom; and that they should report to him in council the result of their enquiries, with such observations as they might have to offer thereupon."

When this measure was adopted, Mr. Wilberforce was too ill to exert himself, but he lost no time in writing to Mr. Clarkson, to inform him of it, and to hasten him to London, for the purpose of taking such steps as might be necessary. The first thing done by Mr. Clarkson was the obtaining of an interview with Mr. Pitt, the way for which had been opened by Mr. Wilberforce. He laid before that eminent statesman all the books, documents, and African productions which he had procured. Mr. Pitt examined them with the utmost care and patience, made numerous enquiries, expressed freely his doubts, and scrutinized the evidence minutely. The result was that "I went away," says Mr. Clarkson, "under a certain conviction that I had left him much impressed in our favour." He had indeed left him so impressed, and the impression was speedily strengthened and confirmed, beyond the power of being effaced. A report having gone forth, that the council would examine witnesses only on the side of the trade, Mr. Clarkson again waited upon Mr. Pitt, and received an assurance, that every person whom the committee should think proper to send would certainly be heard. Mr., now Lord, Grenville was the next person with whom Mr. Clarkson had a conference, and, as he was not shackled by official considerations, he unhesitatingly declared himself an enemy to the trade.

The witnesses on the side of the trade were those which were first examined by the council. Among them, to the great surprise and sorrow of Mr. Clarkson, was a Mr. Norris, who, at Liverpool, had given to him extensive information, and appeared to be decidedly hostile to the traffic; but who, nevertheless, now basely disobeyed the dictates of his conscience, and came forward in behalf of that very practice which he had lately loaded with execrations. One uniform story was, of course, told by these gentlemen. According to their statement, the trade, far from being a nuisance and an iniquity, was an admirable proceeding, a real benefit to humanity. They denied stoutly that kidnapping ever took place, or that wars were ever waged for the sole purpose of obtaining slaves; they described the African princes as being a set of barbarians, who looked upon their subjects as no better than beasts, put them to death on the most frivolous pretexts of superstition or passion, and even for mere amusement or ornament, made piles of their heads at the palace-gates, like the piles of shot in an arsenal; they asserted that those sold for slaves were generally prisoners taken in battle, or sentenced to die for various crimes; and they contended, therefore, that the slave trade was a blessed means of saving these victims, who would otherwise be sacrificed; it being the custom in Africa to destroy all cap-

tives and criminals, provided they were not snatched from this untimely fate, by the benevolent hands of the traffickers in human flesh.

These hardy assertions produced, as was expected, a prejudicial effect upon a part of the council, and of the public. It began to be believed, that the members of the committee were at best credulous men, who had allowed themselves to be deceived by false reports, and whose exertions, if not discouraged, were likely to be productive of incalculable mischief. The friends of the trade held their heads high, and loudly boasted, "that they would soon do away all the idle tales which had been invented against them," and prove their opponents to be grossly ignorant, or gross calumniators. At the same time, that nothing might be left undone in support of their cause, they procured to be written by one Harris, formerly a clergyman and a jesuit, but then a clerk in a slave house, a book bearing the title of "Scriptural Researches on the licitness of the Slave Trade," in which an endeavour was made to prove that the traffic was consistent with revealed religion. This book, despicable as it was, had sufficient influence to mislead many persons of weak minds, who were led by its sophistry to believe, that to oppose the trade was to act in contradiction to the sacred writings. N
there a stronger proof of the truth of

saying, that the devil can quote Scripture to forward his designs.

These arts, however, as is generally the case, were of no permanent advantage to those by whom they were employed. It was soon known, that all the persons hitherto examined were interested, and that the evidence of Mr. Norris was in direct opposition to his own previous testimony. By a strict examination of the witnesses in favour of the trade, it was also proved, that the major part of what had been asserted had no foundation in truth; that slaves were, in reality, often kidnapped; that prisoners were not universally put to death; that the cruelties and superstitions, which had been represented to be general in Africa, were confined to one or two insignificant countries; and that the beautiful humanity of the traders did not induce them to save from execution any of the victims who were unsuitable for their purpose. On the side of the abolition, Mr. Falconbridge, and some others acquainted with the country, were now brought forward. At this critical time, too, Dr. Spaarman and Mr. Wadstrom, who had been commissioned by the King of Sweden to make discoveries in botany and mineralogy, arrived from Africa. Dr. Spaarman was heard by the council, and his deposition established the facts, that wars were entered into solely for the purpose of making slaves, and at the instigation of the traders, who

sometimes intoxicated the native princes, to induce them to consent; that the confidence between man and man was destroyed by the rewards which were held out to individuals to prompt them to kidnap each other; and that the Africans would become a happy and flourishing people, were they not prevented by the existence of the degrading and destructive traffic which was now under consideration. The scale was thus again turned in favour of the friends of the abolition.

Petitions were now pouring in from all parts of the kingdom, and all classes of persons; no less than a hundred and three being presented in the course of the session; and it became the general opinion that, notwithstanding the enquiry carried on by the privy council, something ought to be done by the representatives of the people. Mr. Wilberforce was still in such a state of health as to be incapable of attending to his parliamentary duties Mr. Sharp, therefore, had an interview with Mr. Pitt on the subject. The minister assured him that he was friendly to the abolition, but that, as the matter, from its importance, required to be examined minutely, and as the session was too far advanced to allow of such an examination, he would consider whether the forms of the house would admit of any measure that would be obligatory upon them to take up the question at an early period of the ensuing

session. He speedily found a precedent, and he then gave notice to the committee that, in a few days, he would submit a motion to the House. Deputations were in consequence sent, by the committee, to various members, to request their support, and among them to Mr. Fox, who readily promised to lend to the cause of humanity the zealous aid of his powerful talents and eloquence.

The advocates of the planters and traders were not taken by surprise on this occasion. They expected that the question would ere long be brought forward in the Commons House, and they had prepared accordingly. Lord Penrhyn, one of the members for Liverpool, had already moved for such papers relative to ships employed, goods exported, produce imported, and duties upon the same, as would shew the vast value of the trade which it was in contemplation to abolish.

At length, on the ninth of May, Mr. Pitt made his promised motion. It was "that this House will, early in the next session of Parliament, proceed to take into consideration the circumstances of the slave trade complained of in the said petitions, and what may be fit to be done thereon." The motion was cautiously worded, and, in proposing it, Mr. Pitt spoke with equal caution. He studiously refrained from even hinting any opinion of his own, and

dwelt solely on the importance of the subject, and the consequent necessity of a cool and patient investigation of it in all its bearings and relations. The season was, he said, too far advanced for them to enter on such an extensive enquiry, and, it was, besides, desirable to wait awhile, till they could obtain the result of the labours of the committee of privy council.

The general feeling of the House, on this day, was decidedly hostile to the trade, which was spoken of with more or less of severity by Mr. Fox, Mr. Burke, Mr. Martin, Sir William Dolben, Mr. L. Smith, Mr. Grigby, Mr. Bastard, Mr. Whitbread, Mr. Pelham and others. Blame was attributed to the minister, by Mr. Fox, for not having declared what were his own sentiments, and both he and Mr. Burke protested against the House being influenced, or its proceedings retarded, by any undue deference to the committee of privy council. It was, Mr. Fox said, their duty to advise the king, and not to ask his advice; and to this it was added, by Mr. Burke, that if the representatives of the people wished to preserve their functions, their understandings, their honour, and their dignity, he advised them to beware of committees of privy council. The Commons ought not virtually to abdicate their high trust, and thus compel the people to believe that the privy council was more ready than they were to attend to petitions. At

the same time, it was owned, by the speakers, that the ministers were perfectly justifiable, in having advised the formation of a committee.

Lord Penrhyn and Mr. Gascoyne were the only two members who opened their lips, on the side of the traffic. His lordship considered the African planters and merchants as having been grossly calumniated, and he affirmed that they were anxious for an immediate enquiry. He admitted, however, that if the charges were true, the trade ought to be abolished; and that, at all events, some regulations might not be improper. Mr. Gascoyne joined him in the cry about calumny; described a total abolition of the trade as unnecessary, visionary, and impracticable; and hoped that the house would not forget the trade, commerce and navigation of the country. But even he professed not to be averse from seeing an attempt made to modify or alter whatever might be proved to be objectionable.

The question being put, the resolution was unanimously agreed to, and thus the House of Commons stood pledged to a solemn consideration of the subject. Such, indeed, was the enthusiasm at the moment, that a vote of immediate abolition might possibly have been carried. There is, however, as Mr. Clarkson has justly observed, but little reason to regret, that such an important measure was not adopted with a degree of haste, and seeming want of reflection, which might have

thrown doubts upon its justice, and, perhaps, been ultimately injurious to the stability of the triumph.

It has been seen that even the members of Liverpool did not deny the propriety of adopting some regulations. We shall soon see, how little they were, in reality, disposed to admit of any change. In the course of the debate, or rather conversation, which has just been narrated, Sir William Dolben strongly dwelt upon the miseries which the Africans endured in their passage to the West Indies, or, as it was technically termed, in the Middle Passage. As, during this session, nothing could be done on the great question, he now, as a temporary measure, moved for leave to bring in a bill, to alleviate, in a small degree, those miseries, by securing to the captives proper and sufficient food, and allowing them a somewhat larger space than that into which they had hitherto been crowded. What he asked for them was, in fact, scarcely more than permission to have the power of giving motion to their limbs.

The plan of the honourable mover was highly approved of by several of the members; but Lord Frederic Campbell wished to postpone the discussion, on the ground that there was too general a warmth of feeling to admit of the operation of reason, and Mr. Gascoyne, though he had promised not to be hostile, gave, in a few words,

ominous note of that opposition which he and his colleague subsequently made to the proceeding.

The Liverpool merchants immediately took the alarm, and determined, not only to oppose the bill in all its stages, but also the principle of it, that is to say, they determined to contend that they ought not to be deprived of the privilege of stifling and pressing to death the slaves whom they were transporting. They petitioned the House, and were allowed to employ counsel and bring forward evidence, in support of their claim. The witnesses maintained that no change was necessary, seeing that every thing that was possible was done for the comfort and health of the slaves, who had plenty of room, plenty of air, and plenty of provisions, who amused themselves with dancing on the deck, and were scarcely diminished in their numbers by disease, during the whole of the voyage. The ships were, they affirmed, expressly built for the purpose, with conveniences superior to those of other vessels. To sum up all, they said, that the middle passage "was one of the happiest periods of a negro's life." As a make-weight, however, to this story, they added, that the trade would be utterly ruined, if the merchants were compelled to take less than two full-sized or three smaller Africans to a ton.

Unfortunately for them, Mr. Pitt had previously caused a strict enquiry to be made into the dimensions of the slave ships, and the mode

of their construction. From the witnesses themselves, too, when they came to be cross-examined, the truth was, though with difficulty, extracted. It was found that no slave had more than five feet six inches in length and sixteen in breadth to lie on; that, between the floor and the ceiling another tier of slaves was stowed upon a sort of shelves · that the whole space from the floor to the ceiling was never more than five feet eight inches, sometimes only four feet; that the majority of the vessels were not built for the purpose; that the men were chained, two and two, by their hands and feet, and also by ring-bolts, which were fastened to the deck; that each person had daily but a pint of water, and two meals of yams or horse-beans; that the dancing, which had been so poetically described, consisted of jumping in their irons for exercise, and that they were whipped when they refused to do it; that they were usually below deck fifteen or sixteen hours out of the twenty-four, and in rainy weather could not come up for two or three days together; that in this state they were scarcely able to breathe, and some died of suffocation; that the mortality, on an average, was ten in the hundred, from the period of taking the slaves on board to that of landing them in the West Indies; and, lastly, that the mortality among the crews, though not equal to that among the negroes, was so enormous as to prove that the trade, instead

of being, as had been pleaded, a nursery of seamen, was, in reality a grave. It was proved, on the reluctant testimony of Mr. Dalzell, that, in one voyage, he had lost more than a third of his men, and a larger proportion of his slaves. It was also incontrovertibly proved, that the assertion, that the trade could not be carried on unless three blacks were allowed to a ton, was a daring falsehood; as a majority of the vessels, crowded as they were, carried a number one-tenth less than that which it was now affirmed must be granted, in order to prevent the traffic from becoming a ruinous one to those who were engaged in it.

When the blanks in the bill were filling up, on the 20th of June, Mr. Pitt moved that the act should have a retrospective operation, to commence from the tenth. This was violently opposed by the members for Liverpool, and by Mr. Brickdale, but was carried. Sir William Dolben then proposed to apportion five men to every three tons, in ships under a hundred and fifty tons burthen, and three men to two tons in ships of a larger size. This also was opposed, and gave occasion to a warm and eloquent debate, in which the honourable mover was ably supported by Mr. W. Smith, Lord Belgrave, Mr. Beaufoy, Mr. Martin and Mr. Pitt, the latter of whom commented severely on the evidence, and gave a decisive opinion against the

trade. The motion was carried by sixty-six against five, and the bill was passed and sent up to the Lords.

The opponents of the measure had been disgraced and defeated in the Commons, but they were neither abashed nor disheartened. They pursued the bill to the Lords, with more inveteracy than ever, and they found there a friend with congenial feelings. Their counsel and their witnesses were again heard, but as Lord chancellor Thurlow, who was then indisposed, had made known his wish to be present at the debate, the committee was postponed.

It was hoped, by some persons, that his lordship would lend his aid to the bill. But they certainly did not know him. A tyrant himself, his sympathies were not likely to be roused in behalf of slaves. It is painful to be compelled to say that, throughout the whole of this business, he acted with the hard-heartedness of a negro-driver, and the chicanery of a pettifogging attorney. His first effort in the House, after his recovery, was to attack the bill in a violent philippic, the humanity and logic of which were worthy of each other. The bill was, he said, full of nonsense and inconsistency from beginning to end, and at any rate, ought not to have been brought forward this session, as the introducing of it was a direct violation of the faith of the other House. It was, he maintained, highly

unjust, after the question had been postponed till next year, that "this sudden fit of philanthropy, which was but a few days old, should be allowed to disturb the public mind, and to become the occasion of bringing men to the metropolis with tears in their eyes and horror in their countenances, to deprecate the ruin of their property, which they had embarked on the faith of Parliament." With respect to the trade itself, the ground on which he rested his defence of it was, that the French had lately offered large premiums to encourage it, and that, as they were a politic people, there was reason to presume that, in abandoning it, we were doing politically wrong. He was seconded by the Duke of Chandos and the Earl of Sandwich, the former of whom largely dealt forth predictions of insurrections and massacres in the colonies, while the latter trembled at the idea of the probable ruin of our marine, and the consequent ascendency of France, from the loss of a traffic which, in spite of the evidence, he persisted in considering as a healthy nursery of seamen.

Futile as were such arguments, or rather assertions, the hostility of Lord Thurlow was a formidable obstacle to the bill. The committee sat no less than five times, by which eight days were consumed. In order to protract the discussion, till the close of the session would render a decision impossible, every art was employed.

New petitions were presented; leave was asked for counsel again to be heard; letters were read from Jamaica, stating the mutinous disposition of the slaves; and additional embarrassing clauses were proposed, some of which were with difficulty negatived, while others were adopted. The bill, however, was at length passed by a majority of seventeen to eleven votes.

Though the bill had passed, the struggle was not yet at an end. On its being sent down to the Commons, on the fourth of July, it was found to have been made a money bill, by the insertion of a clause giving bounties; and it was, therefore, thrown out, and another immediately introduced. Under pretence that this second bill was a new one, an attempt was made to delay its progress, by obtaining the hearing of counsel; but this attempt was defeated, and the bill was rapidly forwarded through its regular stages. It was returned to the upper house, was again opposed there, and so many objections were started to some of the clauses, that its friends resolved to re-mould it, and hasten it a third time through the Commons. This latter step was accordingly taken, and the bill, thus amended, was once more submitted to the House of Peers, in which it was received on the tenth of July. It was opposed, and petitioned against, as before. Among the petitions, as if its enemies were anxious to be ridiculous as well as

hateful, was one from Mr. Miles Peter Andrews, well known as a manufacturer of gunpowder, and of fashionable prologues. He complained that, if the bill became a law, it would injure the sale of his gunpowder, and he pleaded that he had rendered great services to the government during the last war, by his provision of that article. In aid of the petitions, Lord Thurlow now made a last effort. Knowing that on the morrow the session would terminate, he moved certain amendments, the adoption of which would have rendered it necessary that the bill should go back to the Commons, in which case it must be lost, as there would be no time for its re-consideration. Aware of the lord-chancellor's design, Earl Stanhope urgently called upon the peers to come to an immediate decision, and in order to bring the point to issue, he moved on the first amendment a negative, which was fortunately carried. The rest of the amendments were disposed of in the same way, and the bill was passed. It received the royal sanction on the following day, on which day the session was terminated. Earl Stanhope, the Duke of Richmond, the Marquis Townshend, the Earl of Carlisle, and the Bishop of London were among the warmest friends of the bill during this arduous contest.

CHAPTER II.

Exertions of both parties to prepare for the contest.—The committee of privy council completes its enquiry into the trade.—Twelve propositions moved in the House of Commons by Mr. Wilberforce.—Evidence examined before the House.—The question postponed till the next year.—Second postponement of it.—Motion for the abolition of the trade rejected by a considerable majority.—The motion brought forward again.—Gradual abolition voted.—Motions for abolishing the foreign slave trade negatived.—Various proceedings on the subject from 1794 *to* 1805.—*Foreign slave trade abolished.—The abolition is, in the year* 1807, *at length carried in both houses, and the bill receives the royal sanction.*

Both parties now began to exert themselves, with more than common activity, in preparing for the approaching struggle. The friends of the trade wrote and published in its behalf, spread the most sinister reports, dwelt pathetically or indignantly on the injury done to their characters, and the probable ruin which awaited them, collected together every witness whom they could influence in their favour, and especially endea-

vo:.d to draw over to their side the members of the legislature. On the other hand, the committee for bringing about the abolition of the traffic was unremitting in its efforts. It kept up an extensive correspondence with all parts of England, and also with France and America; and it even strove to excite for the Africans the pity of foreign sovereigns. From the king of Sweden, the highly gifted Gustavus the Third, it received assurances of his friendly wishes. It had already circulated no less than 20,526 reports, accounts of debates in parliament, and other small papers, and 51,432 pamphlets and books; and it, henceforth, continued, on a still larger scale, the circulation of these works, and added to the list many new productions, among which was an Essay, by Mr. Clarkson, on the impolicy of the slave trade, and a series of a hundred and forty-five questions on the subject of the trade, which series was intended to be sent in franks to all quarters of the kingdom.

Well knowing that there was an almost insuperable difficulty in procuring evidence, where interest and fear opposed the giving of it, the planters and traders loudly called upon their adversaries for proof. Some witnesses the committee had obtained, but not in number equal to those on the other side of the question; and it was convinced that the public would expect it not to shrink from accepting the challenge which

had been thrown out to it with such seeming boldness. In this emergency it was debated, whether it would not be proper to send out persons to Africa and to the West Indies, to gather the necessary information. This plan was, however, rejected, for several reasons, both moral and prudential. It was then resolved, that Mr. Clarkson should be requested to travel to different parts of the kingdom, in search of living testimony. With this request he readily complied. In the course of his journey he travelled sixteen hundred miles, and conversed with forty-seven persons, who were capable of giving satisfactory evidence, of whom, however, he could prevail on no more than nine to come forward and be examined. The rest, though they wished well to the cause, had not the courage to support it in an open and manly manner. In addition to these witnesses, the committee and Mr. Wilberforce had discovered three or four others; so that there was now no lack of that oral testimony which their enemies demanded.

At length the committee of privy council resumed its inquiry into the subject. Its labours were, however, repeatedly interrupted by the illness of his majesty; so that, at a late period, not more than four or five of their witnesses had been brought forward by those who pleaded for the abolition of the trade. There were now eighteen ready to appear on this side; the series

of questions, which had been widely circulated, having called forth several, who were willing to lend their aid. But, when February was far advanced, the enemies of the traffic were alarmed by intelligence, that the lords of the council were on the point of preparing their report. Immediate application was made to the Lords, to hear the remaining witnesses. Equitable as this request was, it could not be granted. Leave was first given to produce eight persons, but this permission was subsequently restricted to the number of three. The last of these three was just quitting the council-chamber, when it was entered by a Mr. Arnold, who had recently returned from Africa, and whose evidence was of the utmost importance; he having carefully noted down on the spot, every fact which had come within his knowledge. By dint of hard pleading, Mr. Clarkson procured a hearing for this gentleman. Having taken down his deposition, the committee closed its investigation; leaving sixteen of the witnesses on this side unexamined, while, on the other, not a single individual was left unheard.

On the twenty-ninth of March, Mr. Wilberforce moved that, in pursuance of its resolution of the last session, the house should resolve itself, on the twenty-third of April, into a committee of the whole house, for the purpose of taking into consideration the subject of the slave trade.

The report of the privy council, which formed a large folio volume, not, however, being ready in time for the members to make themselves acquainted with its contents, the question was afterwards postponed till the twelfth of May.

No sooner was the day appointed for the debate, than the country rang with the clamours of the merchants and traders. The first thing done by them was to call public meetings, at which the most violent language was used, and the most violent propositions were adopted. It was even intimated, by these decorous gentlemen, that the colonies could do without the help of the mother country, and threats were idly thrown out, to intimidate the government. This puny rage cannot fail to remind us of what a French statesman is said to have sneeringly remarked, with respect to the disturbances which took place at Geneva, that they were like a tempest in a wash-hand bason.

As, however, this haughty tone was not likely to excite a strong interest in their behalf, they prudently adopted a less offensive one in their appeals to the public through the medium of the papers; a medium of which they availed themselves to the fullest extent. They maintained that the negroes were but a step removed from the brutes, and that it was an act of kindness to take them from Africa; that the real object of the abolitionists was emancipation; that the

slaves must starve if emancipated; that the slaves would also rebel, and murder their masters, or reduce them to poverty; that, if the islands were to be ruined, this country too would be ruined, seeing that half of its revenue would be annihilated, and its naval strength be decayed; that the planters ought undoubtedly to be compensated for their losses; and that the compensation could not be less than eighty or a hundred millions; and, lastly, that, as the planters had already made wise and beneficent laws to protect the slaves in the colonies, all that was wanted, or could with any justice be asked, was that the trade should be regulated in as wise and beneficent a manner. These assertions, though they had little of novelty in them, and had been a hundred times refuted, had a prejudicial effect upon the minds of some people, and especially some of the members of parliament. A few shuddered at the thought of the bloodshed which it was predicted would be occasioned, but the majority were much more terrified at the idea of the enormous sum which must be drawn from the purse of the nation to indemnify the planters for their imaginary losses.

When the appointed day arrived, the twelfth of May, 1789, Mr. Wilberforce introduced the subject to the house, in an eloquent and elaborate speech. Having recommended a fair and calm discussion, and declared that the motion which

he had to offer had nothing to do with party, and was as reconcileable to political expediency as to national humanity, he proceeded to describe forcibly the base and destructive arts which were employed to procure slaves in Africa, and he contended that African wars were carried on almost solely for the purpose of making captives to sell to the traders, and that the natural consequence of such inhuman proceedings was to degrade and barbarize the African character. The mode of transporting the slaves to the West Indies was the next point to which he called the attention of his hearers: and here he drew a striking picture of the multiplied and dreadful sufferings which were endured by the victims who were confined on board of the slave ships; and he at the same time, animadverted, in a temperate but firm manner, on the deceptious account which had been given of the middle passage, by Mr. Norris and others Death was, he said, a witness which could not deceive them, and the proportion of deaths would not only confirm, but, if possible, aggravate their suspicions of the misery of the transit. Out of every lot of one hundred slaves, seventeen died in nine weeks, and not more than fifty ultimately survived, to add to the stock of effective labourers in our islands. This solitary fact contained in itself a volume of proof.

"Having," he said, "advanced thus far in

his investigation, he felt the wickedness of the slave trade to be so enormous, so terrible, and so irremediable, that he could stop at no alternative short of its abolition. A trade founded on iniquity, and carried on with such circumstances of horror, must be abolished, let the policy of it be what it might; and he had from this time determined, whatever were the consequences, that he would never rest till he had effected that abolition. His mind had, indeed, been harassed by the objections of the West-India planters, who had asserted, that the ruin of their property must be the result of such a measure. He could not help, however, distrusting their arguments. He could not believe that the Almighty Being, who had forbidden the practice of rapine and bloodshed, had made rapine and bloodshed necessary to any part of his universe. He felt a confidence in this persuasion, and took the resolution to act upon it. Light indeed soon broke in upon him. The suspicion of his mind was every day confirmed by increasing information, and the evidence which he had now to offer upon the point was decisive and complete. The principle upon which he founded the necessity of the abolition was not policy, but justice: but, though justice was the principle of the measure, yet he trusted that he should distinctly prove it to be reconcileable with our truest political interest."

Proceeding to the proof of what he had thus

asserted, he urged that the number of slaves in the West Indies might be kept up, without the introduction of recruits from Africa. He pointed out the causes from which the present mortality arose, and the means of removing them; he shewed that the stoppage of importation would compel a better treatment of the slaves; and he adduced instances in which the deaths among the negroes were more than balanced by the births. With respect to the clamour which had been raised by the merchants of Liverpool, as to the ruin which would be brought upon the town by the measure now before the House, he clearly demonstrated that it was unsanctioned by reason. The slave merchants had, he said, asserted that the trade was a losing one with two slaves to a ton, yet they carried it on with three slaves to five tons, and they talked as if the commercial property of Liverpool were wholly dependent on the traffic, though it was well known that the export tonnage of the place was 170,000 tons, of which only thirteen thousand were employed in the traffic.

Turning next to the objections which had been made to the abolition, on the ground of its being likely to injure our navy, by lessening the supply of seamen, and to increase in a similar proportion the resources of the French, who would not fail to take up the traffic when we abandoned it, he replied that, instead of the

trade being beneficial, it was injurious to our maritime interest, as it destroyed more than one-third of the seamen engaged in it, and that, therefore, it was not probable that the French would be eager to embark in a speculation of such an unprofitable nature: he was, on the contrary, of opinion, that they would cordially join with us, in putting an end to the traffic.

Having reminded his hearers that Africa was competent to afford commercial advantages of a better kind, and having exposed the futility of the idea that, in the present instance, regulation alone was practicable, and would be found to be sufficient, Mr. Wilberforce closed an admirable speech, of three hours and a half in length, by laying before the House twelve propositions, drawn from the evidence and the documents which were contained in the voluminous report of the committee of privy council.

It was natural that the representatives of Liverpool, Lord Penrhyn and Mr. Gascoyne, the former being also a planter, should be the first to stand forward in opposition to Mr. Wilberforce. They did not, however, enter upon any discussion of the subject. They both accused him of being so erroneous in his statements that no reliance ought to be placed upon them; and, while Mr. Gascoyne pleaded that his constituents had already sustained a loss by the Middle Passage Bill, and, if the trade were abolished, would have

no opening left for the employing of their capitals, his lordship enlarged upon the ruin and misery which would follow the subversion of the traffic, and claimed a full compensation to be given to the planters, the amount of which compensation he estimated at seventy millions. A vote, pledging the House to the payment of that sum, he considered as being an indispensable preliminary to the motion of Mr. Wilberforce.

The same side was taken by Aldermen Newnham, Sawbridge and Watson, by Mr. Dempster, and, but with far less vehemence, by Sir William Young. The aldermen protested that the abolition of the trade would render the city of London a scene of bankruptcy and ruin, and exhorted the members to take care that, in giving way to the goodness of their hearts, they did not contribute to the downfal of the commercial interests of their country. Mr. Dempster joined in the cry for indemnifying the planters. Though the evidence relative to the mortality of the seamen was upon the table before his eyes, he persisted in believing the trade to be a nursery of sailors; and, though he confessed that sugar could be more cheaply raised by free-men than by bond-men, he declared in favour of the existing system, because neither he nor any person had a right to force a system upon others. Sir William Young was not averse from the measure, provided that it could be accomplished without

injury, and he wished the subject to be discussed; but he feared that, by a total abolition of the trade, the colonies would suffer greatly, and that it would even be prejudicial to the slaves themselves, who would be smuggled into the islands by vessels worse calculated for their accommodation than those which were now in use.

Mr. Wilberforce was supported by Mr. Burke, Mr. Pitt, Mr. Fox, Mr. Grenville, Mr. Martin and Mr. W. Smith. Though labouring under indisposition, Mr. Burke displayed, on this occasion, all his wonted vigour and eloquence. He spoke of the trade in terms of abhorrence, and regretted that Mr. Wilberforce had not brought the question to a decision at once, instead of bringing forward a series of abstract propositions. Such propositions he disliked. They were seldom necessary, and often occasioned much embarrassment and delay. There was, besides, no occasion whatever to assign detailed reasons for a vote, which Nature herself dictated, and Religion commanded. At the same time, he warned his auditors to make up their minds to the consequences which might arise from the abolition, and manfully to determine to pay the price of their virtue. Should they see other nations taking up the trade, let them not, he said, repent of that virtue, and disgrace themselves in the eyes of the world by returning, with a shameless ardour, to the practices which they had

solemnly renounced. If they could resolve to be firm in their purpose, he wished to see them unhesitatingly do away a commerce, which, while it was productive of misery not to be described, most of all hardened the heart, and vitiated the human character. Believing that no injury would be sustained by, but rather a benefit conferred on, the planters, he laughed to scorn the claim of a compensation, and he treated with as little ceremony the doctrine that merchants could find any difficulty in turning their capitals into a ready and profitable channel. In conclusion, he entreated the House not to be led astray, by any delusive pictures of the happiness which the slaves enjoyed. The momentary glee which those unhappy beings displayed in their sports, did by no means disprove their low and abject state. "Nothing makes," said Mr. Burke, "a happy slave but a degraded man. In proportion as the mind grows callous, and all sense of manly pride is lost, the slave feels comfort. In fact, he is no longer a man. Were I asked to define a man, I would say, with Shakspeare,

> "Man is a being holding large discourse,
> Looking before and after."

But a slave is incapable of looking before and after. He has no motive to do it. He is a mere passive instrument in the hands of others, to be used at their discretion. Though living,

he is dead as to all voluntary agency. Though moving amidst the creation with an erect form, and with the shape and semblance of a human being, he is a nullity as a man."

With respect to the propositions, Mr. Pitt differed from Mr. Burke. He thought that Mr. Wilberforce had chosen the only way by which it could be rendered obvious to the world that the House was warranted, on every ground of reason and of fact, in coming to that vote which he trusted would be the end of their proceedings. With respect to the trade, he expressed, in the most forcible manner, his opinion, formed, he said, after a deliberate, minute, and anxious investigation, that no argument, compatible with a respect for justice, could be assigned to warrant its continuance. That foreign powers would clandestinely supply our islands with slaves he did not fear; for he trusted that Great Britain had resources and dignity enough to protect her colonies, and prevent any infringement of her laws. But he did not believe that those powers would act as it had been supposed they would. He rather trusted that they would be inclined to go hand in hand with this country, or to follow her example. If we were disposed to set about this glorious work in good earnest, they might be invited to concur with us, by a negociation to be immediately opened for that purpose. As to the claim of compensation to the planters and

merchants, for the loss to which it was imagined they would be subjected, he denied that it was an equitable one, and he unequivocally declared, that he could by no means be induced to acquiesce in any measure of that kind.

With no less energy and eloquence than the two great orators who had preceded him, Mr. Fox expressed his hatred of the trade. Referring to what Sir William Young had said, he forcibly remarked, that he could not admit it to be true that a clandestine traffic in slaves was worse than a legal one. "It ought," he said, "to be clandestine, if it existed at all. A trade in human flesh and sinews was so scandalous, that it ought not to be openly carried on by any government whatever, and much less by that of a christian country. With regard to the regulation of it, he knew of no such thing as a regulation of robbery and murder. There was no medium. The legislature must either abolish it, or plead guilty of all the wickedness which had been shown to attend it."

The propositions were ordered to remain upon the table, and a day, distant enough to allow all parties time to prepare, was appointed for the discussion.

The friends of the trade had not foreseen the existence of so generally hostile a feeling against them in the House of Commons, and they were, therefore, much surprised and alarmed by it.

Having poured in such a number of witnesses, to be examined before the privy council, they had relied upon the balance of evidence being decisively in their favour. Being disappointed, however, in this expectation, they resolved to turn round upon the mass of evidence, and to attack it as being unworthy of credit. Accordingly, on the 21st of May, Mr. Wilberforce having moved the order of the day, for the House to go into a committee on the report of the privy council, they began to act upon their new plan of operations.

The debate which took place on this occasion was one of the most warm, and even tumultuous, that ever occurred in the House of Commons. As a prelude to it, petitions from planters, merchants, manufacturers, mortgagees, and other persons, were presented by the members who were favourable to the trade. The signal for the commencement of the contest was a question put by Mr. Alderman Sawbridge, who asked Mr. Wilberforce, whether he meant to adduce any other evidence, or to admit the examination of other witnesses. It was replied, by Mr. Wilberforce, that the report on the table was sufficient for his purpose, and that it was for the House to decide as to the propriety of receiving further testimony. The report was immediately attacked, with the utmost bitterness, by Aldermen Sawbridge, Newnham and Watson, Lords

Penrhyn and Maitland, Mr. Gascoyne, Mr. Marsham, and others, as being full of all imaginable kinds of demerit. It was, they said, insufficient, defective, contradictory; the evidence was *ex-parte*, it was manufactured by the ministers, it was founded chiefly on hearsay, it was for the greater part false, and it had undergone no cross examination; to which, doubtless as a proof of their hatred of any thing arbitrary, they added, that it was unconstitutional, and that, if it were admitted, the House would establish a dangerous precedent, and abandon their rights.

The report was strenuously defended by Mr. Courtenay, Mr. Fox, and Mr. Pitt, but especially by the latter. It could not, they said, be *ex-parte*, because it contained evidence on both sides, and even supposing it to be really contradictory, that very circumstance was a proof of its impartiality. If it were weak and imperfect so much the better for its enemies. It was, however, not a little extraordinary, that, when Mr. Wilberforce was content to rest his case on this weak production, its antagonists should be so urgent for him to stand upon stronger ground. That to receive the report would be unconstitutional, was peremptorily denied. It would be so, indeed, if the House had previously resolved to receive no evidence but from the privy council. What reason could be assigned why they were never to receive evidence taken where it was most convenient to

take it? What shackle was imposed upon the House by a report, every tittle of the testimony of which they might, if they pleased, subject to re-examination? Why had not these objections been urged before? The now-censured document had lain five weeks upon the table, and its faults were not discovered till the moment when the House were on the point of coming to the vote. The fact was, and it was a disgraceful one, that the whole of these cavils was a trick to get rid of that which did not answer the purpose of the friends of the trade.

By those friends all the old arguments, if so they may be called, were again brought forward. It was affirmed that the Africans, if not led into slavery, would be butchered at home, in proof of which a letter three-fourths of a century old was produced, and, if its contents were true, it undoubtedly shewed that at the period when it was written, the King of Dahomey was a monster of cruelty. Mr. Alderman Watson denominated the trade a humane and merciful trade. One member declared that the suppression of it would ruin our commerce, affect the landed interest and the funds, and prevent the national debt from being diminished; another predicted insurrections in our islands; a third stigmatised the proposed measure as being hypocritical, fanatical and methodistical; and a fourth abused Mr. Ramsay, one of the witnesses, and affirmed that it would

be an act of swindling to do away the trade, without compensating those who were to suffer upon the occasion. For compensation, indeed, many of the members united their voices; but the futility of their claim was fully exposed by Mr. Burke. Others intreated that only regulation might be resorted to, and stated that the merchants were willing to consent to any thing which might be suggested to them of that kind; a statement the truth of which was rendered somewhat more than doubtful, by the previous and subsequent conduct of the traders, with respect to the bill which bore the name of the Middle Passage Bill.

At length, after a long, violent, and personal debate, in which thirty members bore a part, it was agreed that the friends of the trade should be permitted to bring counsel and evidence to the bar of the House; Mr. Pitt, at the same time, declaring, that he yielded to this, only on the supposition that there would be no unnecessary delay.

This permission was, in fact, a triumph to those by whom it was obtained. Nothing was further from their thoughts than the preventing of delay. In this emergency it was their sole object to gain time, and they knew that, while they possessed the power of sending witnesses to the bar of the House, they had the means of gaining an indefinite portion of time. They

availed themselves so well of this means, that, by the ninth of June, only two witnesses had been fully heard, and by the twenty-third, the business of examination was scarcely in a more advanced state. The call of the House had been fixed for the latter day, on which day it was intended to bring the question to a final issue. But the advocates of the trade having been foiled in an attempt to get rid of the matter altogether, now pleaded that they had many important witnesses to produce, whom it would be an injustice to them not to hear; and they, therefore, moved that the consideration of the subject should be deferred till the following session. As it was manifestly impossible to come to a decision during this session, Mr. Wilberforce acquiesced in the motion; and thus the partisans of the traffic obtained a respite of another year. Before, however, the Parliament was prorogued, Sir William Dolben's Bill was renewed, though not without having been opposed; and some additional clauses were introduced, to provide for the comfort of the seamen by whom the navigation was carried on between Africa and our western colonies.

The members of the committee for bringing about the abolition were not disheartened by this temporary defeat. On the contrary, they exerted themselves with more vigour than ever to increase the favourable impression which had been

produced on the public mind. One of the steps which they took had a wonderful effect. They published an engraving, containing an accurate plan and section of a slave ship, in which engraving the unfortunate victims were faithfully represented, in the crowded and immoveable posture in which they were always stowed. This print spoke at once to the reason through the eye, and convinced numbers of persons of the sufferings which the slaves endured during the Middle Passage, which had been delusively described as an Elysian period of existence. Wedgewood lent the aid of his art, to disseminate thousands of a cameo, copied from the seal of the committee, which bore a figure of a supplicating, fettered black, with the motto of "Am I not a man and a brother?" and these cameos speedily became fashionable among females of every rank, as bracelets, and as ornaments to various parts of their dress. The muse of Cowper, too, by a pathetic ballad, called the Negroe's Complaint, and by other pieces, powerfully contributed to keep alive against the traffic that detestation which was generally felt. On the other hand, the cause of humanity sustained a heavy loss, by the death of Mr. Ramsay, one of its earliest and most zealous supporters, who may be said to have fallen a victim to his zeal; his health having been gradually undermined by his active exertions, and by the virulent and groundless

attacks which were perpetually making upon his character, by the planters, the slave merchants, and their mercenary adherents.

It had been objected that, were England to relinquish the trade, no good would arise from her so doing, for that it would be carried on by France. As the French were now engaged in making reforms, Mr. Wilberforce entertained an idea that they might, if properly applied to, be prevailed upon to number the slave trade among those abuses which ought to be removed. If they could be so prevailed upon, it would destroy in this country an objection which, though it had no support from reason or morality, was, nevertheless, productive of a sinister effect. The committee concurred in opinion with Mr. Wilberforce, and Mr. Clarkson was, in consequence, requested to undertake the task of conferring upon the subject with the leading men in the French political circles. Mr. Clarkson was six months absent upon this mission, and his time was fully occupied during the whole of his absence. He had repeated interviews with Necker, La Fayette, Mirabeau, the Duke de la Rochefoucauld, the Abbé Sieyes, the Abbé Gregoire, Brissot, and many others, in all of whom he excited a strong interest in favour of the oppressed Africans. The sovereign himself examined the specimens of African art and manufacture, and promised to give an attentive perusal to Mr. Clarkson's Essay

on the impolicy of the Slave Trade. The intrigues of the planters, and various other circumstances, however, entirely frustrated the hopes of Mr. Wilberforce and of the committee; and Mr. Clarkson, therefore, returned to England; foiled indeed in the attainment of his primary object, but having added many friends to the cause, and gained, personally, the good-will of all those with whom he had been in the habits of familiar intercourse. On his departure he was charged with a letter to Mr. Pitt, by Mirabeau, who made known to the British minister the temper and sentiments of the National Assembly, stated what numbers he could rely upon for their votes on the question, and declared that he could even reckon upon obtaining a majority, provided that England would give an unequivocal proof of her intention to abolish the trade, without which proof nothing, he was of opinion, could be accomplished. He urged, also, that whatever was to be done, must be done quickly, as the white planters were gaining an influence which would become irresistible, if the proposed measure were long delayed.

The session was now begun, and the examinations were re-commenced. Aware what was the drift of the conduct pursued by the friends of the traffic, and that, if they were allowed to act upon their system, they might prolong the business for years, Mr. Wilberforce moved that evidence should no longer be heard by the House at

large, but should be referred to an open committee above stairs, which should continue to sit, notwithstanding any adjournment of the House itself. The necessity of taking such a step was made obvious by the fact, that, in the last session, twenty-eight days had been occupied in hearing only eleven witnesses on the side of the trade. The motion of Mr. Wilberforce was, nevertheless, violently opposed, but was finally carried, without a division.

Ever indefatigable in the cause, Mr. Clarkson again set forth in search of witnesses. In the course of a journey of a thousand miles, which was performed in three weeks, he conversed with seventeen persons, three of whom consented to come before the House. This journey was succeeded by a second and a third, in which he was still more fortunate; the testimony which he obtained being of the most important kind, as it incontrovertibly established the truth of all that had been asserted, respecting the villainous manner in which the blacks were torn from their native homes, to be carried to the coast, and there sold to the dealers. His third journey was undertaken solely to find out one sailor, of whom he had heard by chance, but of whose name or abode he could learn nothing, except that the man was supposed to be on board of one of the ships in ordinary. This man, who proved to be the gunner of the Melampus, and a

person of unblemished character, Mr. Clarkson was lucky enough to discover, after having visited all the ports, and boarded, in search of him, no less than between three and four hundred ships of war. The labour of Mr. Clarkson was, however, amply rewarded, by the acquisition of this witness, and of five others.

The examination of the witnesses on the side of the trade was closed towards the latter end of April, and on the 23d, Mr. Wilberforce moved for the attendance of three witnesses on the other side. But here, though only their own partisans had been heard, though they had so loudly clamoured against *ex parte* evidence, and though they had contrived to put off the question for a whole year, the friends of the traffic had the face to call vehemently upon the House for an instant decision, and to accuse Mr. Wilberforce of having no other object than delay. This gave rise to many severe animadversions upon them, and to much angry debate. The motion of Mr. Wilberforce was at length carried, and without a division.

The supporters of the trade were, it is true, foiled on this point, but they, nevertheless, were quite successful in the attainment of one of their wishes. By their procrastinating measures they had consumed so much time as to render it impossible for their opponents to bring forward, during this session, all the witnesses who were hostile to the traffic; and, by their reiterated

misrepresentations, which were seconded by a strong personal canvass, they had raised a prejudice in the minds of many of the members of the Commons' House. They had, indeed, conjured up, with wonderful effect, the shadowy forms of insurrection, massacre, ruin, and, above all, of compensation in the shape of eighty millions sterling. This last spectre could not fail of affrighting those who were of opinion, that money ought to be saved, in preference to honour. Akin to this degrading sentiment, and perhaps even less pardonable, as it joined insolence to baseness, was an objection, which was started by some persons, that the evidence against the trade was not of equal weight with the evidence for the trade, because the former was chiefly given by poor men, and the latter by rich: an objection which ought to be recorded, in order that it may be branded with the public contempt, for its illiberal and malignant stupidity. Still, futile and mean as were the arts which were opposed to them, it would not, under such inauspicious circumstances, have been prudent in the friends of the abolition to engage in the final contest before they could avail themselves of the whole of their forces; and they, therefore, did not regret, as they otherwise would have done, that the discussion was once more postponed till the opening of another session.

Previously to the close of this session, the bill

of Sir William Dolben was renewed; and here the friends of the traffic gave a striking proof how sincerely they were in love with regulations. Taking advantage of a thin House, they carried an amendment, by which they obtained an increase of the number of slaves to the tonnage of the ship; and that, too, without taking into account, as had hitherto been the case, and as was obviously necessary, the extent of the superficies of the vessels. By the exertions of Mr. Pitt, however, this amendment was rejected on the following day.

That nothing might be left undone, another journey was undertaken by Mr. Clarkson, during the prorogation of Parliament. It lasted four months, and, in the course of it, he travelled seven thousand miles. Though in many instances he had reason to complain of the timidity or apathy of those who might have done essential service to the cause, yet, at the close of his extensive circuit, he found that his toil had not been bestowed in vain; for he was able to count upon the assistance of twenty new and willing evidences.

It was on the fourth of January, 1791, that the subject was again taken up in the House of Commons. Mr. Wilberforce then moved the appointment of a committee, to examine further witnesses in behalf of the abolition of the slave trade. This might have seemed to be a matter of course. It was not so considered by the ad-

vocates of the trade. It was immediately opposed by Mr. Cawthorne, who contended that the House had heard sufficient evidence; and in this opinion he was joined by several members. The injustice of these persons was exposed by Mr. Wilberforce, who shewed that, out of eighty-one days, which had been employed in hearing evidence, fifty-seven had been devoted to the hearing of the partisans of the trade. He was strenuously supported by Mr. Burke, Mr. Martin, and others, and he carried his motion.

The examinations were continued from the seventh of February till the fifth of April, when they were finally closed. They were conducted in the most illiberal manner by the advocates of the trade, who brow-beat, insulted, harassed, and strove, as much as possible, to confuse the witnesses against it. The candid and gentlemanly conduct of those advocates failed, however, in its purpose. "Not one of the witnesses," says Mr. Clarkson, "was found to prevaricate, or to waver as to the certainty of their facts." Their testimony, too, being all positive, as to what they had seen, was of infinitely more value than the merely negative evidence which was produced on the other side of the question. The evidence filled three folio volumes, and, as in this state it could be of little utility, a faithful abridgment of it was made, and distributed among the members.

The 18th of April was the day fixed upon

for the discussion of the subject. It was not without gloomy forebodings that the friends of the abolition contemplated the approach of that day. There existed, at this moment, peculiar circumstances to give rise to their fears. The French revolution had begun to assume an aspect which excited alarm in the minds of many, which alarm was exceedingly increased by the publication of the Rights of Man. In the French colonies, likewise, events were taking place, which gave to the British planters and slave dealers something like a colourable pretext for pretending that the doctrines of the abolitionists were of a revolutionary nature, and inevitably fraught with ruin, not only to the colonies, but to the parent country. With that sort of base political tactic which is so commonly employed, the friends of the trade held up the committee as a nest of jacobins; and this unworthy artifice was but too successful. Half reasoners, and those who never reasoned at all, were worked up by it into a thorough dislike of the persons attacked, and, of course, of the cause which those persons espoused. Opportunely at this critical instant, as if got up for the occasion, something like a disturbance took place in the island of Dominica. This was an admirable auxiliary to the planters. Meetings were hastily called by them at the London Tavern, terrifying letters were read there, and the result of the deliberation of the assembly was,

that the ministry was implored to send out a military force to each of the islands, to preserve the whites from destruction. This request, however, it was not practicable to comply with, and the planters then resolved that, " as it was too late to send troops to the islands, the best way of preserving them would be to bring the question of the slave trade to an immediate issue; and that it was the duty of government, if they regarded the safety of the islands, to oppose the abolition of it." The decorum, the veracity, and the grammar of their resolution are equally deserving of praise.

Such was the state of things when, on the 18th of April, Mr. Wilberforce made his motion, which was, " that the chairman be instructed to move for leave to bring in a bill, to prevent the further importation of slaves into the British colonies in the West Indies."

It would, within the narrow limits to which this sketch is confined, be in vain to attempt to follow step by step a debate which was continued through two days, and of which a brief analysis occupies more than a hundred and twenty octavo pages. All that eloquence could accomplish, to persuade, to rouse, to melt, to thrill, to bring conviction to the reason, was fully displayed. Never to any assemblage of men were more glowing, more pathetic strains of oratory poured forth, than those which, on this occasion, fell from the

lips of the distinguished individuals who contended in the cause of humanity. Never was a stronger appeal made at once to the head and the heart than that which was now made.

Substantiating, by reference to the documents upon the table, every assertion which he advanced, Mr. Wilberforce first shewed that the slaves were, for the far greater part, obtained in the vilest manner, by their being kidnapped from their homes, or sentenced upon false accusations; that the wars in the interior were entered into for the purpose of taking prisoners to be sold, and that they were fomented by the slave traders, and here he adduced an instance of a captain having instructed his agent "to encourage the chieftains, by brandy and gunpowder, to go to war and make slaves; that the trade so deeply contaminated the morals of those who were engaged in it, as to vitiate all their notions of right and wrong, and induce them to commit the meanest and wickedest frauds upon the unsuspecting natives; that the middle passage was a period of horrible suffering to the blacks, who, notwithstanding they were represented as beasts, had feelings and intellects as acute as the whites had; and that the slavery in which they were said to exist at home, was not like the slavery of the West Indies, but was a happy state of existence, in which even witnesses against the abolition had described them as "sitting and eating with their

masters, in the true style of patriarchal simplicity and comfort."

To the cry which had been raised, that the abolition of the trade would ruin the colonies, he replied that, though it would be sufficient for him to observe, that mere considerations of policy ought never to have any weight against justice, he would go further, and would prove that the cry itself had no support from truth. He would prove that the black population of the islands might be more than kept up without the introduction of an additional number of slaves. The reason that the deaths among the slaves overbalanced the births he traced to various causes, all, however, easily removeable; to the cruelties exercised upon the slaves, the little attention which was paid to their morals, the deficiency of proper medical care, the scantiness of food, and the neglect of attention to the great object of keeping up the stock by breeding. Yet, even now, the mortality was gradually diminishing; it having, in the course of half a century, decreased from three and a half to one per cent. An increase of the stock might, he contended, be expected to take place in a very short time, if the proper means were adopted to obtain it, means which would be adopted when slaves could no longer be imported; and he firmly grounded his argument upon many undeniable facts, which manifested that, wherever the negroes were treated

with kindness, the births among them were uniformly far more numerous than the deaths. An importation of slaves, therefore, was not necessary for the welfare of the islands.

The assertions which he next refuted were the assertions that the trade was a nursery of seamen, and that the commercial prosperity of Bristol and Liverpool would be blighted, and the commerce of the country be much injured, by the success of the present motion. With respect to the first of these, he referred to the evidence, to prove that the trade, instead of being a nursery was a devourer of seamen; the mortality in the slave vessels being, beyond all comparison, greater than that which took place in the vessels employed in other trades; and that those sailors who survived were so thoroughly brutalized by the shameful scenes in which they had been engaged, that they were rather considered as a nuisance than as an acquisition by the captains of our ships of war. To the other assertions he answered, that they were obviously erroneous; the slave trade composing but a thirtieth part of the whole export trade of Liverpool, and a still smaller proportion of the trade of Bristol; and the whole value of our exports to Africa, of which gunpowder to slaughter the natives furnished the largest part, not being annually more than a sum of between four and five hundred thousand pounds. Africa, he reminded his

hearers, was capable of carrying on a commerce far more beneficial, and, at the same time, perfectly innocent. She abounded with productions of value, which she would gladly exchange for our manufactures, when these were not otherwise to be obtained; and to what an extent her demand might then grow, almost exceeded the powers of calculation.

The last objection which he had to remove was an objection made by those who, professing themselves friendly to the abolition, were, nevertheless, of opinion that more time ought to be allowed; and that it would be advisable to leave the business in the hands of the colonial legislative bodies. To those he demonstrated that, in the first place, any regulations which might be made on this subject by the legislatures of the islands must necessarily be inefficient, it being impracticable to execute them; and that, in the next place, they would not only be inefficient as to their avowed purpose, but probably dangerous to the makers of them; it being a hazardous experiment to give to the negroes the power of appealing to the laws before they were rendered fit for the enjoyment of civil rights, by a gradual raising of them from the debased state in which they now existed. The abolition was exactly such an agent as in this case was required. The supply from Africa being cut off, breeding must become a serious object of attention, the natural

effect of which would be, that the slaves would be better treated, and that consequently their moral character would be recovered from the degradation into which it had been brought by the various untoward circumstances connected with their miserable condition. With respect to a gradual abolition, he thought that, considering the miseries which the traffic every moment occasioned in Africa, the idea of it could not for an instant be tolerated, unless "we were ready at once to determine that gain should be our God, and, like the heathens of old, were prepared to offer up human victims at the shrine of our idolatry." The plea that, if we declined the trade, other nations would take it up, he dismissed, as it well deserved, with short but pointed reprobation.

In conclusion, seemingly anticipating what would be the decision of the House, Mr. Wilberforce declared that, much as he might be supposed to feel on this occasion, he was comparatively indifferent as to the result of this debate; he being well convinced that the people of England would abolish the trade, whenever its injustice and cruelty should be fairly laid open to them; and he pledged himself never, while life remained, to abandon the work in which he was now engaged. "Let us not," he said, "despair. It is a blessed cause, and success, ere long, will crown our exertions. Already we have gained

one victory. We have obtained for these poor creatures the recognition of their human nature, which, for a while, was most shamefully denied them. This is the first fruits of our efforts. Let us persevere, and our triumph will be complete. Never, never, will we desist, till we have wiped away this scandal from the Christian name; till we have released ourselves from the load of guilt under which we at present labour; and till we have extinguished every trace of this bloody traffic, which our posterity, looking back to the history of these enlightened times, will scarcely believe to have been suffered to exist so long, a disgrace and a dishonour to our country."

The motion was opposed by Colonel Tarleton, who took the lead, Mr. Grosvenor, Mr. Stanley, the agent for the islands, Lord John Russel, Colonel Phipps, Alderman Watson, Mr. Drake, Lord Sheffield, Mr. Burdon, Sir William Young, Mr. Sumner, and Major Scott.

It was contended, that Parliament had sanctioned the traffic, and, unless it gave compensation, could not abolish it, without a breach of faith; that the friends of the abolition were led astray by a mistaken humanity, the Africans themselves having no dislike of the trade; that kidnapping and other barbarous practices were not as general as they had been asserted to be, but that, at all events, they were the natural consequences of the laws of Africa, and it became

us, as wise men, to turn them to our own advantage; that the unpleasant circumstances which attended the trade ought not to be too curiously enquired into; that foreigners, less humane than we were, would engage in the traffic, if we desisted from it; that it appeared to have been the intention of Providence, from the beginning, that one set of men should be slaves to another, and that Christianity did not prohibit slavery; that a haberdasher's wife once murdered her apprentice, but that nobody ever, on that account, thought of abolishing haberdashery, and that, therefore, we ought not to abolish the slave trade merely because some dreadful stories had been told about it; that all the tales relative to the misery of the middle passage were gross falsehoods; that the Africans ought to be thankful for being carried to be safe in the British colonies; that they were, of course, well treated in the colonies, it being the interest of the planters to treat them so; that they were exceedingly cheerful and happy, a sufficient proof of which was, that they loved finery, miserable persons having no taste for finery; that the West Indies could not be cultivated without them; that the slaves themselves disliked the plan of abolishing the trade, because it would increase their toil by depriving them of future assistance; that the colonies would be exposed to insurrection from them; that the trade kept a great number of seamen in readiness

for the navy; that the loss of it would be ruinous to our commerce and finances; that the Newfoundland fishery could not go on without it, as the negroes ate a vast quantity of inferior fish, which was quite unfit for any other market than the West Indian; that, if the abolition had been so clear a point as it was asserted to be, there would have been no occasion for so much evidence and time to prove it so; and, lastly, that, although there were many reasons against its being attempted, it would suffice to mention only one, which was, that it ought to be considered as a rash, a visionary, and an impracticable scheme.

Some of the members, however, who were hostile to the motion, opposed it with less violence, and rather on the ground of its being inexpedient than of its being unjust. They thought that the trade could not safely be put a sudden stop to, but that it ought to be abolished in a gradual manner. Sir William Young was the leading speaker of this party, and, though he denied the truth of much that had been urged relative to the cruel treatment of the slaves, he declared his abhorrence of the trade, and his speech, throughout, had the merit of being temperate and candid. Mr. Burdon and Mr. Sumner were of the same opinion with Sir William Young, and spoke with the same moderation which he had displayed.

The motion of Mr. Wilberforce was supported by Mr. Pitt, Mr. Fox, Mr. Burke, Mr. Francis, Mr. W. Smith, Mr. J. Martin, Lord Carysfort, Mr. Courtenay, Mr. M. Montague, Mr. Smith, the member for Pontefract, Mr. Stanley, the member for Lancashire, Mr. Ryder and Mr. Milnes. It is worthy of notice, that two of these, Mr. Stanley and Mr. Ryder, were gained over to the cause of the abolition by the irresistible arguments which were brought forward in its behalf; Mr. Stanley having, as he nobly confessed, come down to the house with a determination to vote against the motion, and Mr. Ryder having been quite undecided as to what part he should ultimately take.

Foremost in the cause of humanity, on these memorable days, were the two great political rivals; now rivals only in eloquence and a love of justice. The next place to them was held by Mr. Burke, Mr. Francis, Mr. W. Smith, and Mr. J. Martin. Much of the argument which was brought to bear by these speakers was necessarily identical with that which had been adduced by the honourable mover; but it was placed in fresh lights, strengthened by a reference to additional facts, and richly adorned by all the graces of oratory. The new sophisms and misrepresentations of their opponents were, however, not allowed to remain unanswered and unchastised.

The contempt of right, when it stood in opposition to expedience, which had been manifested by some of the opponents of the motion, was reprobated with indignant severity. The doctrines, it was said, which had been heard on this occasion, ought to have been reserved for times the most flagrantly profligate and abandoned. Were the everlasting laws of righteousness to be subverted, and tens of thousands of our fellow creatures condemned to wretchedness, that some individuals might enjoy opulence, or the government a revenue? The trade was, in fact, one which it was impossible to defend, without first proving that the laws of morality were not binding upon nations. Knowing by evidence what it was, if the House did not by their vote mark to all mankind their abhorrence of a practice so savage, so enormous, so repugnant to all laws human and divine, they would consign their character to eternal infamy.

The attempt to draw from the scriptures arguments in favour of the trade was described as a perversion and a mockery of the sacred writings, and a gross insult upon the understandings of the members, since it could be intended or expected to impose only upon those who never took the trouble of thinking for themselves. That the traffic was in direct contradiction to the whole tenor and spirit of Christianity, must be obvious to every one who believed in the truth of the

maxim that "we ought to do unto others, as we would wish that others should do unto us." If this maxim had its proper influence, the trade could not exist for a single hour. It was denied, too, that slavery in ancient times bore any resemblance to the slavery in the West Indies. The two states were, in truth, widely different. But were there ever so close a resemblance between them, this could not afford any justification of our conduct. Did it necessarily follow that, because a practice had existed, it must be just? By this argument every crime since the days of Cain might be easily defended.

The absurdity of the plea, that, if we abandoned the trade, others would follow it, and thus render our virtue of no avail, was forcibly commented on by Mr. Fox and Mr. Martin. "What kind of morality was this?" was scornfully asked by Mr. Fox. "The trade was defensible upon no other principle than that of a highwayman.' Great Britain could not keep it upon such terms. Mere gain was not a motive for a great country to rest upon, as a justification of any measure. Honour was its superior; and justice was superior to honour." With equal energy, it was remarked, by Mr. Martin, that "it had been frequently, but disgracefully said, that 'we should not be too eager in setting the example. Let the French begin it.' Such a sentiment was a direct libel upon the ancient noble and generous character of this nation. We ought,

on the contrary, under the blessings which we enjoyed, and under the high sense which we entertained of our own dignity as a people, to be proudly fearful, lest other nations should anticipate our design, and obtain the palm before us. It became us to lead. And if others should not follow us, it would belong to them to glory in the shame of trampling under foot the laws of reason, humanity and religion."

That it was the general practice of savages to massacre their prisoners when they could not sell them, was declared to be an assertion which was contradicted by fact. Captives, on the contrary, were often adopted into the families of those who had taken them, and protection was often given to women and to children. But this had, in truth, but little to do with the question. The wars themselves were mostly entered into at the instigation of the traders, and for the sole purpose of making slaves. Abolish the trade, and there would be an immediate decrease in the number of wars. It had been pleaded also, in behalf of the traffic, that many of the slaves were persons condemned by the laws, who were rescued by their purchasers from a more rigorous fate. Even were this true, which to any extent it was not admitted to be, the trade was still as much an object of censure as ever it was. While the traffic existed, those laws, favourable as they were to the love of revenge and of lucre, would never cease to exist. It was the traffic which

perpetuated the laws; as, by the hope of gain which it inspired it encouraged men falsely to accuse their neighbours of being guilty of crimes, some of which, the crime of witchcraft for instance, it was notoriously impossible for any one to commit.

In addition to the acts of cruelty which had already been stated to have been exercised upon negroes, numerous others, of equal atrocity, were adduced; and it was urged, that to suppose, as some had supposed, that interest would at all times influence the masters to be kind to their slaves, was to be ignorant of human nature. As to encouragement being given to the propagation of slaves, it would not become a general practice, till the planters were deprived of every other resource; it being well known that in many cases, the breeding of slaves was checked, on the ground that it was more profitable and less troublesome to purchase a full-grown being than to rear a child.

It was denied that the African trade was of such importance as it had been represented to be; our largest export there being that of gunpowder, which was doubtless sent over for the laudable purpose of maintaining peace, and promoting civilization among the numerous tribes of Africa. There was, too, another benevolent article of export, on which four or five thousand persons in England were said to depend for

bread: and what was this article? It consisted of guns, which were fabricated in such a shameful manner that they could not be fired without extreme danger to the user of them, and which, in fact, killed more from the butt than from the muzzle. The same exaggeration that was resorted to, with respect to the magnitude of the African trade, was also, it was said, employed to swell the value of the colonial trade, and of the colonies themselves; which value did not, in reality, reach to much more than half the sum at which it was falsely estimated. Be it, however, more, or less, it had nothing to do with the subject, as it would not be diminished by the measure which was now proposed. But, of all the arguments which had been brought forward by the opponents of the motion, the most ridiculous, it was said, was undoubtedly that which gravely maintained that, in order to keep up a sufficient number of blacks to consume our refuse fish, which no one else would eat, we ought to persist in carrying on a traffic which was fraught with infamy.

Though Mr. Pitt warmly joined in all that was advanced on this side of the question, and though he eloquently exposed the wickedness of the trade in all its ramifications, his main argument was directed against those who, while they admitted the trade to be in itself an evil, contended that it could not be abolished without

producing a greater evil, in the utter ruin of our West Indian colonies. "As the impracticability of keeping up the number of the blacks appeared," he said, "to operate as the chief objection, he trusted that, by showing it to be ill-founded, he should clear away all other obstacles whatever; so that, having no ground either of justice or necessity to stand on, there would be no excuse left to the committee for resisting the present motion." With this view, he entered into an elaborate enquiry respecting the past and present state of the black population in the island of Jamaica; which island then contained more than half the slaves in the British West Indies. He showed that the proportion of deaths to births had for a long while been gradually decreasing; that the births and deaths at this moment were, perhaps, nearly equal; that with care, such as the abolition would certainly compel the masters to take, the number of births might be expected soon to obtain a preponderancy; and that, consequently, fresh importations were not necessary to enable the colonists to cultivate the soil. The same he stated to be the case with all the other islands, in some of which, as in Barbadoes and Dominica, an increase of numbers by birth had already taken place.

That this debate was protracted through two sittings was not the fault of the friends of the trade. Conscious, perhaps, of their numerical

strength, and willing to save themselves trouble; they strenuously endeavoured on the first night to put an end to the business. The adjournment was, however, carried, by the exertions of Mr. Pitt and Mr. Fox. But the triumph of the advocates of slavery was only delayed. The question being at length put the motion of Mr. Wilberforce was negatived, by a large majority; the noes being a hundred and sixty-three, and the ayes no more than eighty-eight.

Foiled, but neither surprised nor discouraged, the Committee for effecting the abolition now held a meeting, which was numerously attended. They passed a vote of thanks to those who had distinguished themselves in the recent debate, and they declared that, considering the decision of the House rather as a delay than as a defeat, they would "never desist from appealing to their countrymen, till the commercial intercourse with Africa should cease to be polluted with the blood of its inhabitants."

For the failure which they had experienced with respect to their great object, the friends of the abolition were, previously to the close of the session, in a small degree compensated, by the success of one of their benevolent plans. The establishment of the Sierra Leone company was sanctioned by parliament; and it was hoped that this company would be a powerful means of spreading the light of knowledge, and, of

course, morality and civilization, through all that part of the continent of Africa which would be placed within the sphere of its influence.

The friends of the slave traffic were exceedingly elated by their victory, and it is probable that, notwithstanding the published resolutions of their antagonists, they believed it to be final. In this latter point, however, they were mistaken. The committee "bated no jot of heart or hope;" but, on the contrary, redoubled their exertions. They arranged and published the evidence, and distributed it in every corner of the island. Mr. Clarkson again travelled over England and Wales, and the same task was performed in Scotland by Dr. Dickson. It was no small satisfaction to the committee to find that the people were, more warmly than ever, on their side. Many began to manifest their hostility to the slave trade, by discontinuing the purchase of West India produce; and so prevalent was their example that, in a short time, there were calculated to be three hundred thousand individuals who had abandoned the use of sugar. In many of the great towns committees were formed, to co-operate with the London committee; and, from all parts of Great Britain, petitions against the detested traffic were daily sent up to the House of Commons. The whole number of petitions was no less than five hundred and nineteen, of which three hundred and thirty-two were from England and

Wales. Among them was one from the livery of London, which was unanimously voted by a crowded hall.

It was under these auspices that, on the second of April, 1791, Mr. Wilberforce once more brought the question before the House, by moving "that it is the opinion of this committee, that the trade carried on by British subjects for the purpose of obtaining slaves on the coast of Africa, ought to be abolished."

It is manifest, that the reasoning which was employed on this occasion must have been nearly the same with that which was employed on the former. To give an analysis of the debate would, therefore, be to do little more than repeat that which the reader has already perused in the preceding pages of this historical sketch. Arguments which, re-produced after an interval of a year, clothed in different words, and adorned by all the graces of language, might, in a speech of three hours, appear to have the charm of novelty, would, when shewn, close together, in a dry and naked abstract, excite nothing but lassitude and disgust. For this reason, the debate on Mr. Wilberforce's motion, and all the succeeding debates, till the close of the contest, will be recorded with as much brevity as possible. It is the result alone which can be an object of curiosity.

The speech of Mr. Wilberforce was not less

eloquent than that which he made when he first introduced the subject to the notice of the House. He strengthened with new facts all his former arguments; he gave new answers to every objection. There was no part of his statement which he left unguarded by reasoning, none which, where ornament was admissible, he left unembellished by the charms of oratory. The cause of the abolition was also warmly espoused by Mr. H. Thornton, Mr. Whitbread, and Mr. Montague, who spoke at considerable length, and with much eloquence and force of argument.

The motion was opposed by Mr. Baillie, Mr. Vaughan and Colonel Tarleton. It was hoped, they said, that the friends of the abolition would have been contented with the innocent blood which had already been shed. The great island of St. Domingo had been torn in pieces by insurrections, which were occasioned entirely by the debates on the slave trade; and, not satisfied by this, those who were hostile to the trade now wished to complete the ruin in the West Indies, by accomplishing the destruction of the British colonies. The slaves were contented, there was a mutual confidence between them and their masters, and all was quiet, before this impolitic question was agitated. Now the scene was totally reversed; magazines of arms being necessary on every estate. The traffic itself had been sanc-

tioned by a multitude of acts, which were passed in reigns distinguished for the production of great and enlightened characters. We heard then of no wild and destructive doctrines like the present; doctrines which were reserved for this age of novelty and innovation. The planters, it was urged, were good and worthy people; they had never been seditious or rebellious; they had an undoubted claim to full protection, or to full compensation, if parliament were indeed determined to deprive them of their rights and their property. But what necessity was there to interfere in behalf of the slaves? Setting aside liberty, they were as well off as the poor in Europe: they had no wants, no cares, and were seldom abused; they were resigned to their situation, and looked to nothing beyond it. In aid of all this, the value of the colonies, the amount of their exports and imports, the magnitude of the duties which they paid to the revenue, and the number of vessels which they employed, were once more pressed into the service of the speakers. Lest this should not be sufficient, Colonel Tarleton ridiculed and abused the petitions, and, in his usual decorous manner, poured forth invectives against the friends of the abolition, whom he designated as a junto of sectaries, sophists, enthusiasts and fanatics.

But it was not from arguers like these that the friends of the abolition had most to dread.

The real peril to which their cause was exposed arose rather from those who were insidiously dressed in the garb of friends. Mr. Dundas, with the professed view of reconciling both parties, came forward to propose that a gradual abolition should take place. The picture which he drew, of the benefits to be derived from his plan, was a seductive one; as he not only held out the prospect of abolishing the trade, but also of ultimately putting an end to slavery itself. All this was to be effected by the virtue of certain regulations. "By regulations," he said, "he meant such as would increase the breed of slaves in the West Indies; such as would ensure a moral education to their children; and such as would even in time extinguish hereditary slavery. The extinction, however, of this was not to be brought about by allowing the son of an African slave to obtain his freedom on the death of his parent. Such a son should be considered as born free. He should then be educated at the expense of the person importing his parents; and, when arrived at such a degree of strength as might qualify him to labour, he should work for a term of years, for the payment of the expense of his education and maintenance."

The system of Mr. Dundas was adopted by Mr. Addington, then speaker, and by Mr. Jenkinson; the latter of whom confessed that the trade was an evil, founded on injustice and op-

pression, while the former went still further, and declared that it had his utter abhorrence. The abhorrence felt by Mr. Addington was, however, of a singular kind. It did not lead him to any harshness against the thing which he abhorred. He knew, he said, of no language which could aggravate the crime of the slave trade; but, in the same breath, he added, that the case of the West Indians deserved a tender consideration. That is to say, that the criminals who ought to be abhorred, ought to be treated with the most delicate tenderness. He was, therefore, of opinion, that the traffic, which he had stigmatized as atrociously criminal, should be permitted to go on for ten or twelve years longer; and that encouragement should be given to the importation of females, rather than to that of males. Justice might, he thought, be thus done to both parties, without inconvenience to either.

Mr. Jenkinson agreed with him in opinion, as to the propriety of paying attention to the interest of the planters, and assigned as a reason for opposing the immediate abolition, that the number of births had not yet risen to an equality with that of the deaths, and that, before this equality was obtained, it would be imprudent to put an end to the trade, which would undoubtedly be carried on by other countries. No laws, he contended, could prevent slaves from being smuggled into the colonies, and, consequently, it

was better that slaves should be imported, under proper regulations. He closed his speech by proposing, that his Majesty should be addressed, to request that he would recommend to the colonial assemblies to encourage, by premiums, an increase of births; and also that a bounty of five pounds per head should be given to the master of any slave ship, who should import in any cargo a greater number of females than males, not exceeding the age of twenty-five years."

The plan of Mr. Dundas and his supporters was strenuously opposed by Mr. Fox and Mr. Pitt. On those who were hostile to every kind of abolition the chancellor of the exchequer did not bestow many words. Denying that the laws quoted as giving a sanction to the slave trade could at all bind the legislature to the continuance of that trade, or even that they could give a sanction to what was in itself unjust, he called the attention of the House to one important circumstance, which was, that the laws were avowedly passed for purposes which they did not now attain, and that they were perpetually and grossly violated by the very persons in favour of whom they were now pleaded. This alone was a sufficient answer to all that had been asserted as to the positive enactments in favour of the slave trade. Then, turning to combat the gradual abolitionists, he contended that no evidence whatever had been adduced to disprove his statement,

that the births were equal to the deaths, and that, therefore, importation was unnecessary; he insisted that, if proper vigilance were exercised, there would be no possibility of smuggling slaves into the islands; he affirmed that, with mild treatment, the negroes would be enabled to perform a larger quantity of work; he showed that insurrections in the colonies were always produced by the newly-imported slaves; and, finally, in the most forcible and pathetic language, he entreated the House to listen at length to the voice of humanity, and, by abolishing the trade, at once wipe a foul stain from the character of their own country, make some small atonement for enormous wrong, and give to the natives of Africa the same common chance of civilization with the rest of the world.

The speech of Mr. Fox was in a more severe and criminatory tone. The absurdity of the plans which were suggested by Mr. Addington and Mr. Dundas he exposed in a masterly manner. The bounty on the importation of females was, he said, nothing less, in other words, than offering a premium to a crew of ruffians, for the vilest of purposes. It was letting loose a remorseless banditti, against that weak and defenceless sex, of which men were the natural protectors. This banditti were, by pecuniary rewards, to be stimulated to kill fathers, husbands, brothers, in order that, when the carnage

was over, the female relatives of the slain might be led into slavery. A happy instance this, of what was to be expected from men of professedly moderate principles. The scheme of Mr. Dundas, though not equally atrocious, was both cruel and ridiculous. Children were to be educated so as to qualify them for being freemen, and they were then to be made slaves for ten or fifteen years; at the end of which time they would probably have become unfit to be free, and might, therefore, be retained in bondage for a few years longer, or perhaps for the whole remaining term of their existence. Never was there a scheme heard of so moderate, and yet so thoroughly absurd and visionary. No! it was not schemes such as this that could be productive of benefit. There was, there could be, no medium. The trade must be at once abolished. For his own part, he declared that, whether he were in Parliament or out of it, whether he acted with a large minority or with a small one, this question, while he had a voice to speak his sentiments, should never remain at rest.

The propositions of Mr. Jenkinson were negatived by a majority of a hundred and forty-seven. The amendment of Mr. Dundas, that the abolition should be gradual, was then carried by a hundred and ninety-three voices against a hundred and twenty-five. His amendment having been thus adopted, the question was finally put. Eighty-

five members voted against any abolition, and two hundred and thirty on the opposite side.

By many persons this decision was looked upon as a triumph. The committee for obtaining the abolition were not, however, to be deluded by that which appeared to be an advantage, but which was, in reality, an injury to their cause. They knew that, by gaining time, the friends of the trade might be said to gain almost every thing. The public attention would relax with respect to a question which was erroneously supposed to be already decided in a satisfactory manner, and when the period arrived, at which the law was to be enforced, the traders would not fail to find some pretext for laying claim to a still further delay. Accordingly, the committee passed a series of resolutions, in which they stated, that the House, by voting the gradual abolition of the trade, had manifested their opinion, that the trade was cruel and unjust; that the remedy proposed for the cruelty and injustice thus ascertained was not an adequate one; that, neither was the remedy such as the people of England had asked for in their petitions; and that as, during the interval in which the traffic was to be allowed to exist, fresh outrages must of necessity be committed upon Africa, it became a duty in the enemies of the trade to use every constitutional means for the attainment of its instant abolition.

Mr. Dundas moved his resolutions, eleven in number, on the twenty-third of April. The leading points in them were, that the supplying of slaves to foreign colonies should immediately cease; that the whole trade should cease in seven years; that during its continuance no males should be imported above twenty, and no females above sixteen years of age; that punishment should be inflicted on those traders who committed cruelties on the coast of Africa; and that foreign nations should be invited to concur in the measures which we had adopted. He also held out a hope of religious instruction being given to the slaves, and that predial might be substituted in the place of personal service.

This scheme was warmly opposed by Mr. Pitt, Mr. Wilberforce, and Mr. Fox, the latter of whom observed that, by this new system of humanity, the slave traders were in future only to be allowed to steal innocent children from their disconsolate parents. After some debate, the House adjourned.

The debate was resumed on the twenty-fifth, and continued on two subsequent days. Mr. Dundas having moved that the trade should be at an end on the first of January, 1800, Lord Mornington, now Marquis Wellesley, proposed to amend the motion, by inserting the year 1793, instead of the year 1800; and he supported his amendment by an animated and argumentative

speech, in which he contended that the prolongation of the trade was no less unnecessary, than it had been proved to be unjust. Several members joined him on this occasion, among whom was Mr. Windham, who poured forth against the trade a philippic, which was equally remarkable for its severity and for its eloquence. One important fact was stated in this debate, by Sir James Johnstone, which was, that he had introduced the plough into his own plantation in the West Indies, and had found that the land produced more sugar than when cultivated by slaves in the ordinary way. The amendment was, however, rejected, by a hundred and fifty-eight voices against a hundred and nine.

When the House met on the twenty-seventh, Lord Mornington returned to the charge, and moved, as an amendment to the original motion, that the trade should come to a termination in 1795. This produced a debate, in which there was nothing of novelty, except a clumsy attempt, on the part of Lord Carhampton, to throw ridicule and obloquy on those who were the friends of what he chose to consider as a fanatical, unjust and injurious project. The amendment was negatived by a hundred and sixty-one against a hundred and twenty-one. But as, during the debate, some of the members had shown a disposition to fix on a middle point between the two dates which had been proposed, Sir Edward Knatch-

bull brought forward another amendment, which was successful; it passing in the affirmative, by a hundred and fifty-one votes against a hundred and thirty-two. The blank in the resolution was consequently filled up with the first of January, 1796, and a committee was named to carry the resolution itself up to the House of Lords.

The business came before the Peers on the eighth of May, and it was soon obvious that there was little probability of its progress being accelerated in that quarter. Lord Stormont proposed that evidence should be heard at the bar, and that an inquiry should be instituted, as to the present state of the West India islands, the average quantity of sugar and rum which they produced, and the whole of their trade. In order to prevent the delay which the examination of witnesses at the bar would occasion, Lord Grenville moved that they should be heard by a committee above stairs. This was negatived by a majority of twenty-seven. The Duke of Clarence took a decided part in favour of the trade. The hearing of evidence was now begun; but, on the fifth of June, when no more than seven persons had given their testimony, a motion was carried, by which all further consideration of the subject was postponed till the ensuing session.

One circumstance occurred during this year, which was alluded to in the debates, and gave some hope that foreign powers had begun to open

their eyes to the iniquity of the trade. By an ordinance of the twentieth of March, the King of Denmark declared that, after the year 1803, the trade should no longer be tolerated in any of his colonies. It does not appear that this ordinance excited the slightest dissatisfaction in any class of his subjects.

Notwithstanding the decision of the Commons, the success of the friends of the abolition was now more problematical, perhaps, than it had ever been before. The examination at the bar of the Lords might be protracted to an interminable length; and it also laid the Committee under great disadvantages, many of their witnesses being dead, and many others absent, so that it was once more necessary to traverse the whole of England and Scotland for the purpose of bringing together additional evidence. This, however, was by no means the most inauspicious of the existing circumstances. The situation of the country was singularly unfavourable to those who sought to put an end to the trade. At the commencement of 1793 all minds were agitated by political disputes, Great Britain was engaged in a war with the French republicans, and it unfortunately happened that those very republicans, by whom she had been forced into the war, were the persons who had, for many years, been most actively hostile to negro slavery and the traffic in slaves. In many of those who abhorred repub-

licanism, it was a natural though not a liberal feeling, to extend their hatred to every thing which was in favour with the demagogues of France.

The session of 1793 gave melancholy proof of what a change had taken place in the sentiments of many of the members of Parliament. When on the twenty-fifth of February, Mr. Wilberforce moved that the House should resolve itself into a committee on the twenty-eighth, Sir William Young proposed to postpone the business till that day six months, and his amendment was carried by a majority of eight. Mr. Wilberforce was equally unsuccessful in an attempt which, after a lapse of more than three months, he made, to obtain leave to bring in a bill to limit the importation of slaves. He was outvoted by a majority of thirty-five against twenty-five.

A better fate seemed, for a while, to attend another of his efforts. Wishing at least to lessen an evil which he could not entirely remove, he, on the fourteenth of May, brought forward a motion for leave to introduce a bill, to abolish that part of the slave trade by which the British merchants supplied foreigners with slaves. In this he was joined by his late antagonist, Sir William Young, who owned that this branch of the traffic ought to be done away with; the traffic itself being defensible only on the ground of imperious necessity, which did not exist in the present case.

The motion, however, was carried but by a majority of seven. The bill was obstinately opposed in every stage of its progress, and though, at first, it seemed to have a fair chance of making its way through the Commons, it was ultimately thrown out by a majority of two.

In the Lords the business of the abolition did not wear a much more favourable aspect. There was only one circumstance which afforded any satisfaction to the enemies of the traffic. It was the rejection of two motions, made by the Duke of Clarence and the Earl of Abingdon: the first, to postpone the consideration of the slave trade till after the Easter recess; the second, to get rid of it altogether. There was nothing remarkable in the speeches of the noble movers, unless, indeed, we may regard as such, the scurrilous language which both the speakers disgraced themselves by using. Not more than seven witnesses were examined during the whole of this sitting of Parliament.

At an early period of the year 1794 an event occurred, which could not fail of being regarded by the friends of the abolition as highly inauspicious to their cause. On the fourth of February, the National Convention added one more to its numerous insane or, more correctly speaking, wicked acts of legislation, by decreeing the immediate enfranchisement of the slaves in the colonies of France. Nor was this a purely bene-

volent and disinterested measure; in which case, absurd and mischievous as it still would have been, the motive by which it was prompted would have had a claim to respect. The destruction of England, through the ruin of her commerce, was openly avowed, by Danton and other members, to be one of the benefits which this decree was expected to produce. It would, they said, "give a great example to the slaves in the British and Spanish colonies," and it might, they added, now be declared "that England was no more." This decree was passed, like most of their decrees, by acclamation; not the slightest investigation having been entered into, not the slightest degree of reasoning employed, on so important a subject. The English partisans of the slave traffic were, doubtless, infinitely indebted to these enlightened legislators, for having thus furnished them with weapons of so formidable a kind.

But, though every thing seemed to conspire against them, the Committee did not relax in their exertions. While they were aiding the cause by every means in their power, Mr. Clarkson once more journeyed in search of evidence. This journey, which occupied five months, was the last effort which, for some years, this excellent and indefatigable man was capable of making. Incessant toil, and incessant anxiety, had, by this time, nearly destroyed his constitution. His nervous system was so shattered, that sight,

hearing and memory, began to fail him; and his frame was so weakened, that either bodily or mental action reduced him, with alarming rapidity, to an exhausted state. "I was, therefore," says he, "obliged, though very reluctantly, to be borne out of the field, in which I had placed the great honour and glory of my life."

Unwilling to give offence to the House of Peers, by touching upon the general question, which was now before it, Mr. Wilberforce, in the session of 1794, confined himself to the bringing forward the bill to abolish the trade, as far as regarded the supplying of foreigners by British vessels. It was urged, by him and his supporters, that this trade was now nearly extinct, and might, therefore, be suppressed without injury to any one; that the House stood pledged to the abolition in general, and, of course, could not avoid giving its assent to this proposal; and that even those who defended the slave trade, because they feared that our islands would be deficient in their proper number of slaves, ought to vote for this motion, which would tend most effectually to secure an adequate supply for ourselves. In reply to this, all the old arguments were brought forward against the abolition, and it was added, that it was indecorous for the Commons to interfere while the Lords were investigating the subject; that the foreign branch of the trade

was not nearly extinct, forty or fifty vessels engaged in it having lately sailed from Liverpool; that the projected alteration was an unjust infringement upon private property, and a clog upon trade, which at this moment ought especially to be protected; that it was, moreover, an insidious attempt, which made part of a system of attack upon our constitution; and that the discussion of it would unsettle the minds of the negroes, and induce them to revolt. To this it was answered, that, if the Lords chose to be indefensibly tardy in their proceedings, that was no reason for the Commons to stand still; that, as the negroes well knew what passed in this country, it was at once idle and disgusting to talk of preserving quiet among them, by keeping them in ignorance; and that there was not the slightest ground for believing that the bill now before the House would be productive of any other than beneficial effects. In spite of these arguments, the bill was violently opposed in all its stages, and was petitioned against by some merchants of London and of Liverpool. It was, however, carried by the strenuous efforts of its friends, and was sent up to the Lords.

On the second reading, it was attacked by the Duke of Clarence and the Earl of Abingdon, the latter of whom assailed it with the same kind of eloquence which he had employed on a former occasion, but strengthened by an addition of

opprobrious epithets and criminatory assertions against the authors of the measure. But his lordship was not its most formidable enemy. Lord Grenville and Dr. Horsley, the Bishop of Rochester, declined to give it their sanction. The reason which they assigned was, that it ought not to have been introduced, pending the inquiry into the general subject: a reason, the soundness of which is not obvious to common understandings. Lord Stanhope and Lord Lauderdale supported the bill; but the support which was given to it by the former of these noblemen was not likely to be serviceable to it, as he chose to profess himself to be a jacobin, and "a correspondent not of Mr. but of Citizen Condorcet." The bill was thrown out by a large majority.

Aware that the examination of witnesses at the bar would be an endless task, the Bishop of Rochester endeavoured to have the examination referred to a Committee above stairs; but his proposition was so vigorously resisted by the Duke of Clarence, Lord Thurlow, and others, that it was negatived by forty voices against fourteen. What degree of interest the Peers felt in the question of the abolition, may be judged from the circumstance of their having heard but two witnesses during the whole of this session. After this period they dropped even the semblance of attention to the subject, and

forbore to give themselves the needless trouble of calling witnesses to the bar.

With the same eloquence, the same arguments, and the same success as before, Mr. Wilberforce, seconded by Mr. William Smith, renewed, on the 26th of February, 1795, his motion against the whole of the trade. What he now asked for was leave to bring in a bill for the abolition of the traffic. He was ably supported by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, by Mr. Fox, and Mr. Whitbread. The debate was long, and gave rise to a splendid display of talent, and to no small portion of vehemence and asperity. Nothing new was said in behalf of the trade. On this occasion, however, Mr. Dundas entirely threw off the mask; and declaring that the abolition ought not, according to the resolution of the House, to be carried into effect in 1796, he declined to give any definite opinion as to the period when it ought to take place. It must, he said, be accomplished gradually, and with such an allowance of time as would not make it severely felt. Mr. Wilberforce's motion was negatived by a majority of seventeen.

The struggle was renewed in 1796, and at first with better hopes; but the bill, after passing through most of the stages, was thrown out by a majority of four. In the debates which occurred there was nothing so remarkable as the hardi-

hood of the friends of the traffic, who, in some of the arguments which they used, betrayed an utter contempt of the common sense of mankind. They said that the traffic, instead of doing mischief engaged the attention of the petty African princes, and kept them from amusing themselves with wars and massacres; that the merchants of Liverpool had built ships of a peculiar construction, and made dry docks, which would be rendered useless; that there was nothing to be gained by the bill, the slave trade, as it then existed, being a mere non-entity, a gratuitous risk; that the abolition would be a misfortune to the slaves themselves; and that, as Magna Charta forbade right to be sold, delayed or denied, the bill was a violation of the great charter, because it sold, delayed, and denied the rights of the West India planters. On such language as this, it would be a waste of time to offer any comment.

With the laudable view of ameliorating in some degree the situation of the negroes, Mr. Francis, who had already distinguished himself in the debates on the general question, came forward on the 11th of April, with a measure, which he explained in a speech, not only eloquent, but manifesting deep thought, and a thorough knowledge of the human heart. His motion was for leave to bring in a bill, to amend the condition of negroes, and other slaves, in the British

colonies. His idea was, to raise the slave gradually from his present degraded state. The leading principles of his plan consisted in giving to the slave a legal allotment of a cottage and land for life, with time and implements to cultivate his portion of the soil; restraining planters from holding more slaves than their estates would feed; prohibiting all persons, unmarried and under a certain age, from being overseers; taking the whip from overseers, and allowing them power only to mitigate a sentence; and, lastly, instituting negro juries, for the trial of offences. He also proposed to make several regulations, of minor importance.

This scheme was exceedingly distasteful to several of the members, who contended against it, as unnecessary, the negroes being in general more happy and comfortable than the poor people of this country. They also affected to consider it as a sort of robbery of the planters, and they did not hesitate to throw out hints, that it would induce the West India colonies to renounce their allegiance. Foremost among its opponents was Mr. Dundas, who spoke of it with a degree of splenetic illiberality, which, even from him, could scarcely fail to excite astonishment and disgust. But it was probably the hostility of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, which was the main cause of its failure. He looked upon it as being, in reality, a measure

which taxed the colonies, and which, therefore, was dangerous. It was accordingly rejected without a division.

So languid were the feelings of the House, with respect to every thing which was connected with the slave trade, that even the annual act, originally introduced by Sir William Dolben, for regulating the conveyance of slaves from Africa, was suffered to expire. Though the bill for renewing it was brought forward in February, it was postponed so often, and had so little attention paid to it, that it at length dropped, in consequence of there not being a sufficient attendance of members to constitute a house. Fortunately for humanity and for the captive negroes, the traffickers, who, on the first passing of the act, had loudly and repeatedly predicted that it would ruin them, had been so benefited by the diminution of deaths which it occasioned, that, for the sake of their own interest, they now continued to carry on the trade, in strict conformity with the rules which the law was intended to enforce.

In the session of 1797, the friends of the trade determined to pre-occupy the ground, and, if possible, silence the abolitionists by some measure which should wear the semblance of a reform of the slave system. Accordingly, on the sixth of April, Mr. C. Ellis moved "that a humble address be presented to his majesty, to

request that he would be graciously pleased to give directions to the different governors of the West India islands to recommend to their respective councils to take the proper steps for increasing the population, so as thereby to diminish the necessity of importing negroes from Africa, and ultimately to lead to the total abolition of the slave trade; likewise to adopt measures for promoting the moral and religious improvement of the negroes in the West Indies; and for securing to them their rights by a proper administration of justice; and to assure them that this House will be ready to co-operate with them in accomplishing these desirable ends."

This motion was seconded by Mr. Barham, and supported by Mr. Bryan Edwards, Lord Hawkesbury, Sir W. Young, and Mr. Dundas.

It was argued, on this side, that the immediate abolition would, if practicable, be utter ruin to the planters, but that it was not practicable, as no power on earth could prevent a supply of negroes from being obtained by smuggling; that, as smuggling was so easy, the abolition could never be brought about without the consent of the colonists; that the planters were a much injured and calumniated set of men, who were not at all to blame, nor had any share in the guilt or the profit of the trade, which did not originate with them, but was wholly British; that they were be-

nevolently ready to do every thing in their power for the happiness of their slaves; and that the plan which was now suggested would meet with their full approbation, and could not fail of answering every rational purpose which the friends of the abolition could possibly hope to attain. There was, however, one circumstance which threw more than doubt on the boasted humanity of the planters. It appeared that they considered themselves to be entitled to continue the importation of slaves till all the lands were cultivated, or to claim an indemnification, if this advantage were denied to them.

The motion was opposed by Mr. Wilberforce, Mr. Pitt, Mr. Fox, Lord Carysfort, Mr. W. Smith, and Mr. Ryder. They maintained that the plan was nothing more than a deception, intended to prevent any thing really beneficial from being done; that there was no necessity for continuing the importation; that smuggling might be hindered; that nothing was to be hoped from laws made by the colonists themselves; that to postpone the abolition till all the lands were brought under cultivation, was to postpone it for ever, not more than two-fifths of the soil in Jamaica being yet cultivated; and that the planters would do wisely, in lending their aid to put an end to the traffic, seeing that the daily accession of new captives, who must naturally be fraught with feelings of hatred and revenge, would, per-

haps, at length expose them to the most direful calamities.

The words which spoke of "ultimately leading" to an abolition, Mr. Ryder moved to leave out, because, in his opinion, they seemed to be intended to make this measure serve as a substitute for one more effectual. He was seconded by Mr. Hawkins Browne; but his amendment was negatived without a division. Mr. Ellis's motion was then put to the vote, and was carried by a majority of thirty-six.

To the call which was thus made upon them some attention was paid by the legislatures of the Leeward islands. A general council and assembly, from all the islands, was convened at St. Christopher's, in 1798, and the result of the labours of this body was, the passing of an act for the preservation and protection of slaves. Of what benefit this act was productive, it is unnecessary to enquire.

As Mr. Wilberforce was convinced that no good could arise from Mr. Ellis's plan, he did not think it proper to relinquish his own. On the fifteenth of May, he moved for leave to bring in a bill, to discontinue the trade within a limited time. Tired and disgusted by the conduct of the friends of the traffic, and still more so by the barefaced manner in which the House had falsified its own solemn vote, he spoke, on this occasion, in a se-

verer tone than usual; and, instead of going again over the beaten track of argument, he endeavoured to rouse his hearers to a sense of what they owed to humanity, and to their own characters.

The advocates of the trade were fully on the alert, and they did not fail to ring the changes upon all their old assertions, among the foremost of which was the impossibility of cutting off the supply that might be obtained by smuggling. This time, however, they went a step further than they had before gone. Mr. Ellis, assuming as a fact that all the slaves were vagrants or criminals, thought that Africa might receive from the trade the same kind of benefit which this country received from Botany Bay; Mr. Edwards facetiously recommended to Mr. Wilberforce, to employ his benevolence at home, and to take under his protection the race of blacks, which might be found in the streets of London, under the name of chimney sweepers; and Mr. Sewell gave it clearly to be understood, that no abolition could possibly take place till the whole of the lands belonging to the colonial proprietors were fully cultivated, or in plain terms, till after the lapse of several centuries.

This language was eloquently censured by Mr. Pitt, Mr. Fox, and several other members. Their eloquence, however, was exerted in vain.

When the division took place, the motion of Mr. Wilberforce was negatived by a majority of eighty voices against seventy-four.

In the debate on Mr. Ellis's motion, he had pleaded that the colonists ardently wished to attach the slaves to the soil, but that they were prevented from attaining their wish, by a statute of George the Second, which rendered slaves liable to be sold at the suit of their master's creditors. Of the wisdom and ultimate benefit of such a measure as they were said to be desirous of adopting there can be no doubt. This question was, a short time after, taken up by Mr. Bryan Edwards, who, with much feeling, expatiated on the hardship to which a slave was exposed, in being sold, and perhaps sent to the mines of Mexico, after his habits were formed to his new country, and he had perhaps become possessed of a little property, the fruits of his industry. He moved, therefore, to repeal the statute of the fifth of George the Second, and he pledged himself to the House, that the colonists would gladly avail themselves of the opportunity which was thus offered to them by the British parliament. He obtained his wish; the law was repealed without a dissenting voice; but the colonists did not think proper to redeem the pledge which, in their name, he had given to the House of Commons.

The slave-carrying bill was re-enacted in this

session, and a bill, introduced by Mr. W. Smith, for regulating the height between the decks of slave ships, was also passed. By Mr. Smith's act, the clear height between decks was fixed at not less than four feet one inch. These two bills were subsequently incorporated together, and a somewhat larger allowance of space was obtained for the slaves; not, however, without a strenuous resistance from the friends of the traffic, who presented petitions, obtained leave for counsel to be heard, and vehemently protested, that to grant to each negro a few inches more of room, would be the same thing as abolishing the trade by a positive law.

The sessions of 1798 and 1799 were not allowed to pass by without renewed efforts, on the part of Mr. Wilberforce, and of those distinguished characters who agreed with him in opinion. Splendid, however, as were many of the speeches, it would only prove tedious to give any analysis of the debates. Argument and eloquence were still on the one side, and prejudice and interest on the other; and, unfortunately, the latter continued to prevail over the former. There is only one circumstance which is worthy of notice, it is that Mr. Windham, who had once been earnest for an immediate abolition, was now willing to leave the business to be managed by the colonial assemblies. In the year 1798, the motion against the trade was negatived by eighty-seven voices

against eighty-three; in 1799 by eighty-two against seventy-four.

In both these years an attempt was made to obtain at least some mitigation of that enormous evil which it was found to be impossible entirely to remove. In 1798, Mr. Henry Thornton moved for leave to bring in a bill, to prevent the purchasing of slaves on the northern coast of Africa. One great reason for the making of this motion was, that the carrying on of the trade in the immediate neighbourhood of Sierra Leone was found to frustrate the beneficial effects which it had been hoped would result from the foundation of that colony. The part of the coast which Mr. Thornton was desirous to free from the ravages of the trade was about one-third of the whole; but it did not furnish more than one-tenth of the total number of slaves. His motion was, of course, opposed by Colonel Tarleton, Colonel Gascoyne, and others. It was, however, warmly supported by Mr. Bryan Edwards, who spoke, on this occasion, with much liberality of feeling. The bill was brought in; but, in consequence of the pressure of public business, the question having subsequently been postponed to a late period of the session, Mr. Thornton declined taking any further steps till the following year.

In 1799, he again brought the bill forward. Though pertinaciously harassed by petitions, and other instruments of delay, it at length passed

through the House of Commons. It was not so fortunate in the House of Peers. By means of repeated postponements, fresh petitions, the harangues of council, and the protracted examination of evidence at the bar, its progress was retarded till the fifth of June, on which day a decisive effort was made against it, by the friends of the trade. The Duke of Clarence and Lord Thurlow were two of its most determined opponents. Dr. Horsley, the bishop of Rochester, was among the most eloquent of its defenders. He lashed, with a just severity, the manifestly false and deceptious testimony which had been given by some of the witnesses; he chastised, too, the counsel, who had thought proper to talk of "the visionary projects of fanatics;" and, in answer to those who affirmed that the scriptures did not prohibit the trade, he contended that St. Paul had explicitly condemned the traffic, by coupling man stealers along with murderers; and he pointed out, as being especially worthy of remark, that slave-traders was the correct translation of the word which, in our version of the Bible, was translated man-stealers. The bill was, nevertheless, thrown out, by a majority of sixty-eight to sixty-

Having, session after session, been thus foiled, the friends of the abolition deemed it prudent to desist, for a while, from pressing the subject on the attention of the Legislature. In the years

1800, 1801, 1802, and 1803, therefore, they confined themselves to moving for certain papers, and making known their purpose to come forward again at a future period. The Committee, too, continued its labours, and increased its strength, by the election of several zealous members, among whom were James Stephen, Zachary Macaulay, and Henry Brougham, men of undoubted talent, and of indefatigable exertion.

During this interval of time, then, there was only a solitary instance in which any thing like a debate took place upon this subject. This was on the twenty-seventh of May, 1802, when Mr. Canning moved for an address to his Majesty, "praying him not to alienate any of the uncleared lands in Trinidad, unless upon the condition that they were not to be cultivated by negroes newly imported from Africa." Mr. Canning was induced to take this step by a rumour which was afloat, of a plan having been formed, for the sale of these lands. In a speech, of somewhat equivocal language, Mr. Addington, then the Chancellor of the Exchequer, denied that such a plan was in contemplation with respect to Trinadad, and he threw out a hint, that it was intended by government to bring, in the course of the next session, the whole question of the trade under the consideration of the House. Mr. Canning, therefore, withdrew his motion.

At length, in the year 1804, the friends of the abolition returned to the charge; and they

did so with renovated hopes, the Irish members, most of whom were supposed to be friendly to the cause, having now taken their seats. On the thirtieth of March, Mr. Wilberforce asked for leave to renew his bill for the abolition of the slave-trade within a limited period. At this epoch, Mr. Barham, with a candour which was highly honourable to him, made known his change of sentiment, and stepped forward as one of the supporters of Mr. Wilberforce's motion. Leave for bringing in the bill was granted by a hundred and twenty-four votes to forty-nine. The bill, though vigorously resisted, and frequently divided upon, was carried through the Commons by majorities of equal strength. Throughout the debates, Mr. Addington was among the opponents of the bill, and Mr. Barham among its active friends. In the Lords the bill was lost; the question being postponed, on the motion of Lord Hawkesbury, till the following year.

Though, in this session, the friends of the abolition had been ultimately defeated, there was nothing, in the circumstances of their defeat, which was at all of a nature to discourage them. On the contrary, in the House of Commons they had manifestly gained so much ground as to authorise a belief, that their antagonists in that quarter were too weak to oppose to them, in future, any effectual resistance; and they had also reason to hope that, in the House of Lords, they might, at no distant time, obtain an equal

ascendancy. It was, therefore, with considerable expectations of success that, in the year 1805, they once more renewed their labours. The subject was, as usual, introduced by Mr. Wilberforce, and the bill went on to a second reading, when an amendment was moved, by General Gascoyne, to postpone it till that day six months. A warm debate took place. The amendment was opposed by Mr. Fox, Mr. Pitt, Mr. Barham, Mr. Huddlestone, and other members. The speech of Mr. Huddlestone was particularly forcible and eloquent. On a division, however, the amendment was carried by a majority of seven; the ayes being seventy-seven, and the noes seventy.

At first sight, this unexpected defeat wore a very discouraging aspect to the friends of the abolition. They soon, nevertheless, recovered their spirits, on finding that it had been occasioned solely by the absence of nine of the regular supporters of the motion, who had never been absent before, and of nearly all the Irish members who were friendly to their cause. It was resolved, therefore, to re-produce the question, in a new form. In pursuance of this resolution, Lord Henry Petty gave notice of a motion for leave to bring in a bill to abolish the foreign part of the trade. But, before the period arrived for him to act upon this notice, the impeachment of Lord Melville, and other important public business, intervened, which prevented his lordship from

bringing forward his motion in the course of the year 1805.

The time was now at hand when the long labours of the friends of the abolition were to receive their reward. To prepare for the struggle of 1806, Mr. Clarkson, who, being restored to health, had rejoined the committee once more, commenced his travels in search of evidence, to fill up the chasm which had been made, by death or dispersion, in the ranks of the original witnesses. He succeeded, to the utmost extent of his wishes.

The death of Mr. Pitt, which took place in January 1806, though it deprived the cause of one of the warmest and most eloquent of its supporters, was undoubtedly beneficial to it. By the decease of the premier the ministry was broken up, and power fell into the hands of a cabinet, of which all the members were hostile to the traffic in slaves. They could, therefore, act with an unanimity and vigour which were denied to Mr. Pitt, by the peculiar circumstances in which he was placed. The preliminary step against the trade was taken on the 31st of March. On that day, Sir Arthur Pigott, the attorney-general, brought in a bill, which was intended to prohibit British ships, subjects, and capital from being employed in furnishing slaves to foreign powers; to prevent foreign ships from being fitted out in British ports; and also to give full effect

to an order of council, issued in the preceding year, by which British merchants were forbidden, except under certain limitations, to import slaves into the colonies which had been conquered from the enemy, during the war. The bill was drawn up with the greatest possible care, so as to guard against any possible infraction of its enactments. It was strenuously opposed by Mr. Rose, Generals Gascoyne and Tarleton, and others, as being unjust, impolitic, and ruinous to our commerce and manufactures. Its opponents divided against it upon the third reading, but they were defeated, their numbers being only thirteen against thirty-five.

In the House of Lords the bill encountered a still more stubborn resistance. Petitions having been read, and counsel heard, the Dukes of Clarence and Sussex, the Marquis of Sligo, the Earl of Westmoreland, and Lords Eldon and Sheffield, contended against it, in several of its stages, with nearly the same arguments which had been so often urged, and so often refuted. The injury which would be done to our commerce was, however, the great stalking-horse of its opponents on this occasion. With a low-minded illiberality and contempt of truth, which cannot be too severely reprobated, Lord Westmoreland is said to have affirmed, that "the idea of the abolition first originated, within a few years past, among atheists, enthusiasts, jacobins, and such descriptions

of persons." The bill was supported by the Duke of Gloucester, the Earls of Suffolk and Buckinghamshire, Viscount Sidmouth, Lords Grenville, Holland, Lauderdale, Ellenborough, and Auckland, and the Bishops of London and St. Asaph. It was finally carried by a majority of thirty-five; the contents being fifty-three, the non-contents only eighteen. One of the heads was thus lopped off from the sanguinary hydra which had so long fattened on the blood of the natives of Africa.

A blow of a more decisive kind was next struck, as the precursor of the final destruction of the trade; a destruction which, in consequence of the advanced period of the session, could not at this moment be achieved. On the 10th of June, Mr. Fox moved, "that this House, considering the African slave trade to be contrary to the principles of justice, humanity, and policy, will, with all practicable expedition, take effectual measures for the abolition of the said trade, in such a manner, and at such a period, as may be deemed advisable." This motion was seconded by Sir Ralph Milbanke.

The debate which ensued was of as great a length, and of as much animation, as any of the former debates; but, for reasons which have already been stated, to give an analysis of it would only be to inflict an useless fatigue upon the reader. Nothing new was said, nothing new could be said, upon a subject which had under-

gone so many thorough investigations in the course of the last twenty years. All the old arms of the friends of the trade were, however, on this occasion, again brought forth, and were wielded with as much confidence as if they had not been tried in a hundred conflicts, and found to be as worthless as the sword and mail of Satan were, when opposed to the weapon of Michael. Suffice it to say, that, at the close of a long discussion, Mr. Fox's motion was triumphantly carried by an immense majority, there being a hundred and fourteen voices in its favour, and no more than fifteen against it.

As soon as the result of the division was declared, Mr. Wilberforce moved for an address to his Majesty, "praying that he would be graciously pleased to direct a negotiation to be entered into, by which foreign powers should be invited to co-operate with his Majesty, in measures to be adopted for the abolition of the African slave trade." This was carried without a division, as was likewise a motion, that "the resolutions be communicated to the lords, and that their concurrence should be desired therein."

The resolution was introduced to the House of Peers, on the 24th of June, by Lord Grenville, in a masterly speech; the Earl of Westmoreland having previously been foiled in an attempt to put in the usual dilatory plea, of examining witnesses and hearing counsel at the bar. The resolution

was opposed by the Earl of Westmoreland, who bore a prominent part in the debate, by Lord Hawkesbury, by Viscount Sidmouth, and by Earl Fitzwilliam. It was supported by Dr. Porteous, the Bishop of London, Dr. Horsley, the Bishop of St. Asaph's, Lord Chancellor Erskine, Earls Stanhope, Grosvenor, and Spencer, the Earl of Suffolk, Lord Holland, and Lord Ellenborough. The last of these lords commented, with considerable severity, on the exaggerated accounts which the friends of the trade gave with respect to their probable losses, and he justified his censure by declaring that, "when pleading formerly before their lordships, in his professional capacity, for the merchants of Liverpool, he had often delivered statements, which he had received from them, and which he afterwards discovered to be grossly incorrect."

The question having been put on the resolution, it was carried in the affirmative by a majority of forty-one to twenty. The address to his Majesty, which had been voted by the Commons, was then adopted, without a division.

It was now certain that the trade was at length doomed to its merited fall. As this certainty, it was rationally thought, could scarcely fail to stimulate the traders to avail themselves to the utmost of the short period of action which was left to them, and as they would consequently take new ships into their service, and perhaps

resort to worse than their ordinary means of procuring a supply of slaves in Africa, the friends of the abolition deemed it necessary to take some precautionary measure, to prevent such a temporary extension of the sentenced traffic. A bill was accordingly passed, which prohibited any vessel from clearing out for the slave trade, after the first of August, 1806, unless it had been previously employed, in the same manner, by the same owner, or had been contracted for, previously to the 10th of June, for the purpose of the trade. This was the concluding measure of the session of 1806.

In spite of their triumph a gloom was thrown over the minds of the victorious party, by the death of Mr. Fox, which took place in the October of this year. To the very last moment of his existence, the great object of putting an end to the traffic was next to the heart of this illustrious character. Fortunately for the cause of humanity, his surviving friends were possessed of the same persevering spirit of benevolence by which he himself had been animated. In the session of 1807, the business was taken up by Lord Grenville, who, on the second of January, presented to the House of Lords a bill for the abolition of the trade. It was printed, and ordered to lie upon the table, while counsel were heard at the bar against it. The debate came on in the course of a few days. The supporters

of the bill were the Dukes of Gloucester and Norfolk, the Earls of Selkirk, Rosslyn, Moira, Stanhope, Caernarvon, Suffolk, and Lauderdale, Lords Holland, Northesk, and King, and the bishops of London and Durham. On the other side were, the Duke of Clarence, the Earls of Westmoreland and St. Vincent, and Lords Sidmouth, Redesdale, Eldon and Hawkesbury. The debate was long and animated, but the friends of the bill were triumphant, and it was carried by a large majority, there being a hundred votes and proxies in its favour, and only thirty-six against it. The period of the abolition was fixed on the first of May. There was, however, a proviso, by which vessels that had cleared out of an English port for Africa, previously to that day, were allowed to the first of January, 1808, for the completion of their cargoes, and the landing of them in the West Indies. After the first of the new year the trade was no longer to exist.

Petitions, meanwhile, were presented to the House of Commons, from Jamaica, Trinidad, and other quarters, and counsel were heard against the bill. An attempt was made to obtain the examination of witnesses, but it was successfully resisted by Lord Howick. The bill was brought to the House of Commons on the tenth of February. It was read a second time on the twentieth; and, on the twenty-third, the commitment of it was moved by Lord Howick,

in an eloquent and elaborate speech, in which he embodied a majority of the arguments that had so often been urged upon this subject. He particularly pointed out, that the present moment was the fittest for accomplishing the purpose in view, the slave-trade of France and Holland being now nearly annihilated, and Denmark and America having abolished theirs. He was supported by Mr. Wilberforce, Mr. Roscoe, Sir Samuel Romilly, Mr. Lushington, Mr. Fawkes, Sir John Doyle, Lord Mahon, Lord Milton, and Earl Percy.

The bill was violently opposed by General Gascoyne, and with equal hostility, but with more temper and talent, by Mr. Hibbert. The former even went so far as to throw out a sort of menace, that the colonists would resort to insurrection, if the bill became a law. He also descanted on the utter impossibility of preventing the colonial proprietors from keeping up their stock of slaves by the means of smuggling. Mr. Bathurst and Mr. Hiley Addington expressed themselves in favour of a gradual abolition. The commitment of the bill was at length carried, by two hundred and eighty-three voices against sixteen.

In its progress through the Committee, the bill was contended against with a determined spirit, though by scanty numbers. On the sixth of March, Sir Charles Pole moved to substitute the

year 1812, instead of the year 1807. His proposition gave rise to an animated debate, in which many members bore a part. At the close of the contest the amendment was negatived, by a hundred and thirty-five noes against seventeen ayes. The first of March, 1808, in place of the first of January, was, however, inserted in the bill, as the last day on which the landing of slaves was to be permitted in the colonies.

The question, that the bill be read a third time, was put on the sixteenth of March. Here again a warm debate took place. On this occasion, Mr. Windham, who had entirely apostatised from all his original principles with respect to the abolition of the slave traffic, was one of the most forward opponents of the measure. But, though the friends of the trade would not miss this only opportunity of giving vent to their dissatisfaction, they were, by this time, too well convinced of their weakness to go any further; and, accordingly, the bill was passed without a division.

Near as the advocates for the abolition seemed to be to a complete victory, they were, nevertheless, extremely agitated by fears, which were not irrational. The ministry, upon the influence of which they mainly relied to crown their labours, was, at this moment, tottering to its fall. The King, it was known, had resolved to dismiss it, in consequence of its wish to admit the catholics

to an equal participation of constitutional rights. Should that ministry be displaced before the bill passed into a law, all that had hitherto been done would, probably, have been done in vain. The most strenuous exertions were, therefore, made to forward the bill, which, having been amended in the Commons, was yet to be printed, returned to the other House, perhaps again debated there, and finally presented for the royal sanction. By dint, however, of great diligence, the printing of the bill was accomplished by the twenty-third, on which day it was introduced to the House of Peers, by Lord Grenville, and was but feebly opposed. It was carried, and sent to the House of Commons, with an additional amendment, containing the words "country, territory or place," which were discovered to have been accidentally omitted, and the want of which would have rendered it of no utility whatever. This amendment, of course, was immediately adopted. Thus, both Houses had completed their share of this benevolent work. There was, however, still one thing requisite to quiet the alarm of the friends of the abolition. This was the royal assent. On the morning of the twenty-fifth of March, the members of the administration received orders to wait upon the Sovereign, to deliver up the seals of their offices. Fortunately a commission had been obtained, to give the royal assent to several bills, among which was the bill

for abolishing the slave-trade. As soon as the ceremony of executing the commission was over, the ministers resigned the insignia of office, and retired into private life, bearing with them the consolation of having at least contributed largely to save countless and unborn thousands from captivity and oppression, and to clear the character of their country from a stain, which had too long sullied it, of the darkest die.

"Thus," says Mr. Clarkson, and he might well exult in such an event, "thus ended one of the most glorious contests, after a continuance of twenty years, of any ever carried on in any age or country. A contest, not of brutal violence, but of reason. A contest between those, who felt deeply for the happiness and the honour of their fellow creatures, and those, who, through vicious custom and the impulse of avarice, had trampled under foot the sacred rights of their nature, and had even attempted to efface all title to the divine image from their minds." It is, also, as he justly observes, worthy of remark, and a subject of rejoicing, that "two nations, England, and America, the mother and the child, should, in the same month of the same year, have abolished this impious traffic."

CHAPTER III.

Motion of Earl Percy.—Establishment and exertions of the African Institution.—Act to make slave trading a felony.—The Spanish American governments declare against the trade.—Spanish slave code.—Motion respecting the introduction of British laws into Trinidad.—Enormities of Huggins and Hodge.—Treaty with France.—Slave Registry Bill.—Various diplomatic and Parliamentary proceedings.—Conclusion.

By those who had been so perseveringly active in the suppression of the slave trade, it was hoped that, with the use of proper means, the moral condition of the negroes would, in the course of years, be so much improved, that the blessing of liberty might at length be extended to them, not only with safety, but even with advantage to the colonial proprietors. They were, however, aware, that the bringing about of this desirable object must, in the very nature of things, be a work of time; and that, for many and obvious reasons, it would be exceedingly imprudent to act with precipitation in an affair of such extreme delicacy. Fears and prejudices had been excited in the minds of the planters, which,

groundless as they were, it was of importance to remove, and the removal of them was certainly a task which it would not be possible to accomplish within a short period. Nor would it be wise, nor even truly benevolent, to strike off at once from the blacks the shackles which they now wore, and leave them to their own guidance, with unenlightened minds, with debasing habits, and, too probably, with rankling and inveterate feelings of hatred and revenge. A vast majority, therefore, of the friends of the abolition of the slave trade, were desirous to leave the question of abolishing negro slavery untouched, till the silent but steady operation of moral causes should have raised the negroes in the scale of human existence, and by so doing, have rendered them worthy of the enjoyment of freedom. They, consequently, deprecated all discussion upon this subject, as being, in reality, only calculated to retard the event which it was intended to promote.

There were, however, some who were more sanguine in their expectations of what might immediately be done, and more eager to see it speedily performed. Among these was Earl Percy, who, while the bill relative to the abolition of the trade was yet pending in the Lords, brought forward, in the House of Commons, a motion for leave to bring in a bill for the gradual abolition of negro slavery. Though he contended that, as the trade had been declared to be contrary to the principles of jus-

tice, humanity and sound policy, it followed as a necessary consequence, that slavery itself ought to be put an end to, he, nevertheless, did not call for the emancipation of the slaves, but proposed that, after a certain date, to be fixed by the legislature, the children born of slaves should be free, by which means the system of slavery would, at length, be abolished.

This motion was opposed by several members, among whom were Lord Henry Petty and Mr. Wilberforce. The danger of hurrying on the measure, and the impolicy of debating it all at the present critical moment, were the chief grounds of opposition. On the side of Earl Percy was Mr. Sheridan, who maintained that something ought promptly to be done; that slavery would never wear itself out, but would become more rigid, unless the legislature became more vigilant; and that the plan of giving freedom to the children of slaves was the safest which could possibly be imagined. An abrupt termination was put to the debate, by Sir Charles Pole moving that the House should be counted. It being found that there was not a sufficient number of members present, the House adjourned, and the question, of course, dropped; nor was it again resumed.

Though the great object of those benevolent characters, who had so long exerted themselves for the purpose of destroying the British slave

trade was now attained, they did not consider themselves as being yet at liberty to bring their labours to a close. They thought, in the first place, that the miseries which the trade had entailed upon Africa, imposed it on them as a duty to take all such steps as lay in their power for making some reparation to that injured and benighted quarter of the globe. It was likewise highly necessary for them to watch over the execution of the laws which had recently been passed, in England and in other countries; to suggest the means which might render them more effectual; and, as far as their exertions could avail, to forward the abolition of the trade by those foreign states by which it was still pursued.

It was with this view of the subject that, on the fourteenth of April, 1807, the society called the African Institution was established. At the outset it declared its fixed resolution, neither to undertake religious missions, nor to engage in commercial speculations. Its avowed purposes were to keep a vigilant eye on the slave traders, and to labour for a complete abolition of the traffic in slaves; to promote the instruction of the Africans in letters and in useful knowledge, endeavour to enlighten their minds with respect to their true interests, spread information among them as to the mode of establishing a beneficial commerce, introduce to them the improvements, useful arts and medical discoveries of Europe, and stimulate them to cultivate the soil, by exciting and direct-

ing their industry, and by furnishing them, when needful, with seeds and plants, and implements of husbandry. It was also the intention of the Society "to collect and diffuse, throughout this country, accurate information respecting the natural productions of Africa, and, in general, respecting the agricultural and commercial capacities of the African continent, and the intellectual, moral, and political condition of its inhabitants; to obtain a knowledge of the principal languages of Africa, and, as has already been found practicable, to reduce them to writing, with a view to facilitate the diffusion of information among the natives of that country; and, finally, to employ suitable agents, and to establish correspondences as shall appear advisable, and to encourage and reward individual enterprise and exertion in promoting any of the purposes of the Institution."

The society immediately began to act with vigour upon the system which it had formed. It opened a correspondence with persons who could aid its designs, it established a school for the natives at Sierra Leone, and engaged teachers to teach the Arabic and Susoo languages to Europeans resident in that colony, it sent out a plentiful supply of the seed of cotton and of other plants, it offered premiums for the importation of various articles of commerce, and it obtained a diminution of some of the heavy duties which had hitherto operated almost as a prohibition upon the

sale of African produce. These steps were successively followed by many others of a similar kind. The government performed its part with equal alacrity. It established a court of vice admiralty at Sierra Leone, for the purpose of giving more complete effect to the act for abolishing the slave trade, it dispatched two ships of war to the coast, to prevent the infraction of the law, and ordered the commanders to explain the beneficial effects of the measure to the African chiefs, and it appointed a commission, consisting of three gentlemen, to investigate minutely the state of the different British settlements in that quarter, and to indicate in what manner they might be rendered conducive to the great object of civilizing the African continent. An early result of all this was, that the trade with Africa experienced a considerable increase, though the circumstances of the period were extremely unfavourable, the slave traffic having almost depopulated the neighbourhood of Sierra Leone, and many other of the maritime districts.

The wisdom of the resolve which the Institution had entered into, to watch the proceedings of the traffickers in human flesh, was speedily made obvious. The love of lucre is too powerful a feeling to be conquered by any common means, and this abominable traffic was well calculated to excite, and to feed it. So enormous was the profit of these base adventurers, that the speculation was gainful, if only one cargo out of

three reached its destined port. Accordingly, the traffic revived, and even swelled to more than its former magnitude. Between 70 and 80,000 negroes were torn from their native land in the course of the year 1810. The trade was chiefly carried on by the Portuguese, and by Americans, under Swedish and Spanish colours; for Spain having now thrown off the yoke of France, her flag was once more displayed on the seas, and it is a melancholy consideration that, having become the ensign of liberty, it should have been degraded, by being applied to such an unhallowed purpose, as the carrying on of a commerce in slaves. But it was a still more melancholy consideration that, in defiance of the laws and of humanity, British subjects should be found to have engaged in the trade to a considerable extent; many vessels under foreign colours, though belonging to Englishmen, having sailed from the Thames, for the purpose of conveying slaves from the coast of Africa to the Portuguese and Spanish American settlements. This, however, was the case, and the grossest perjury was unhesitatingly committed to elude detection.

To put a stop to this growing evil, the government increased its naval force on the African station, and gave orders to the naval commanders to exert the utmost vigilance. In consequence of these orders, numerous vessels were seized and condemned. At home, the directors of the In-

stitution, kept a watchful eye upon the ports, carefully collected and communicated information, and were fortunate enough to detect and to visit with punishment some flagrant violations of the law. For the purpose of enlightening foreign nations on the subject, they also promoted the publication, in the Dutch, French, Spanish and Portuguese languages, of those works and tracts which were most likely to produce a conviction of the vileness and impolicy of the slave trade. That this was not a needless labour is abundantly proved by one extraordinary fact. Such was the brute ignorance of the Brazilian colonists, that they had never heard of the question of the abolition, till, in the year 1810, they accidentally obtained some knowledge of it from an English newspaper.

Portugal was at this moment almost entirely dependent upon the exertions of Great Britain for her political existence. It might, therefore, be supposed, that her ruler would be willing to leave nothing undone, which he could honourably do, to gratify his powerful ally and protector; and that, consequently, a death blow would be given to the carrying on of the slave trade by Portuguese subjects. Those who had hoped that this would be the case, were, however, disappointed. In the treaty of alliance between Great Britain and Portugal, which was ratified on the nineteenth of February, 1810, an article

relative to the slave traffic was, indeed, inserted; but, though it bore the semblance of fairness, it was any thing rather than satisfactory. It seems to have been drawn up by the Portuguese negociators, and, of course, it was worded with a studied jesuitical ambiguity, which ultimately rendered it of no effect. Among other nuisances, which were tolerated by this article, was the carrying on of the trade from all the Portuguese settlements, among which settlements was the island of Bissao, at the mouth of the Rio Grande, in ten degrees north latitude. Had the cession of Bissao been obtained, or, at least, had a stipulation been made for interdicting the traffic there, two thousand three hundred miles of coast would have been liberated from the ravages of the slave-dealers. As it was, the traders availed themselves of this oversight to the full extent. They not only persisted in their nefarious dealings at the privileged spot, but they enlarged them, by means of a kind of coasting trade, carried on in canoes, from a considerable distance to the north and south of the Rio Grande. The country on the banks of the river was entirely desolated by their barbarous activity.

In England, happily, the time was past when the partisans of the trade could venture unabashed to stand forth in its defence. The violation of the abolition law by British subjects excited great indignation, and it was resolved to

adopt stronger measures than mere pecuniary infliction to ensure obedience to the laws. Before the facts came to light, however, it was too late in the session for the parliament to originate any legislative proceeding; but the House of Lords pointedly expressed its sentiments by an address, on the motion of Lord Holland, as did likewise the House of Commons, by a series of resolutions, moved by Mr. Brougham, both of which were unanimously adopted. This was followed up, in the session of 1811, by an act, which made the trading in slaves a felony, punishable by transportation for fourteen years, or by confinement to hard labour for a term of not less than three nor more than five years. Such was the change which had taken place within a short period, that this act passed through both Houses without any opposition. Its author was Mr. Brougham.

A severe check was about this time given to the foreign slave trade by two decisions, the one pronounced by the Privy Council, the other by the Court of Admiralty. The first of these laid it down as a rule, that an American could not have a legal property in a slave vessel, his government having prohibited the traffic, and that, therefore, all such vessels, professing to belong to citizens of the United States, were liable to be captured. The natural consequence of this was, that, as soon as the decision became known, the

American flag ceased to be employed in affording a cover to the trade. The Americans then resorted to fictitious Spanish or Portuguese papers, but here the second decision, which was delivered by Sir William Scott, greatly cramped their operations by rendering the use of this last subterfuge a matter of no small difficulty and danger.

In Spanish America the trade was gradually narrowed by the wise and benevolent conduct of those provinces which shook off the yoke of the mother country. One of the first measures of the junta of the Caraccas was to prohibit the importation of slaves. This liberal example was next followed by the Congress of Chili, and subsequently by the government of Buenos Ayres, the latter of which even went so far as to decree that all children, born to slaves, after the thirty-first of January, 1813, should be born free.

Spain herself seemed, for a moment, to be on the point of displaying that enlightened humanity which was worthy of her rank and of her cause. Among other praise-worthy acts, the Cortes, in 1811, performed that of abolishing the slave-trade; but, unfortunately, in this instance, as in many others, the power of the Cortes was not commensurate with their will. The decree which they passed was never carried into effect, and the disregard of it which was manifested by the regency, is said to have been occasioned by the

base and interested remonstrances of the merchants of the Havannah.

Whatever may be the guilt which Spain incurs by her perseverance in a barbarous traffic, it must be owned that her code of slave laws, which was promulgated in 1789, deserves to be mentioned with the highest praise Its mildness and equity are honourable to the feelings of the framers of it, and of the sovereign by whom it was sanctioned. Nor is there any reason to believe that it is not faithfully executed. By this code, every owner of slaves must instruct them in the Christian religion, procure them to be baptized within a year, and maintain a priest to say mass, and expound to them the doctrines of christianity; he must provide them with such food and clothing as to the magistrates may seem to be sufficient, and likewise with commodious habitations; he must encourage marriages, and not prevent the slaves of different estates from intermarrying, and, in cases where the estates are distant from each other, he must dispose of the wife to the maste of the husband at a fair valuation; he must not overtoil them, nor compel those to labour who are more than sixty or less than seventeen years of age, nor employ females in work which is unsuitable to the sex; he must allow them reasonable innocent diversions; he must not turn old slaves or children adrift to

starve; in the higher class of crimes he must leave the punishment to the law, and in the lower class he must not punish any slave with more than twenty-five lashes, and those must be given only by himself or his steward, and in such a manner as not to cause any contusion or effusion of blood. Obedience to these injunctions is secured by fines and punishments of various kinds: the judge may even deprive of all his slaves an inhuman master. In addition to this, the negroes have the right to redeem themselves at an equitable price; freedom is given to every female with whom her master has cohabited; and if the father have, by any act, acknowledged the illegitimate offspring, they may, in failure of lawful children, inherit his property, and they may succeed, without any such act, to the property of their mother.

By the capitulation which surrendered Trinidad into our hands, the Spanish laws, of which this code forms a part, were guaranteed to the inhabitants. The slave code had, however, fallen entirely into disuse since the possession of the colony by the British. As one step towards ameliorating the condition of the negroes, it was now brought into action again, much to the gratification of the slaves, and as much to the disgust of their masters.

To get rid of this code, which was a nuisance in their eyes, the Trinidad slave proprietors hit

upon a very ingenious expedient. They became exceedingly enamoured of the British laws, and consequently eager to be admitted to the enjoyment of them. As British subjects they were, it seems, desirous to possess the same privileges as were possessed by the inhabitants of other British colonies. Their scheme was a good one, for there was, at first sight, something in it which was of a nature to win the favourable regard of the mother country. It seemed to be a merit in Englishmen, to wish to live under the statutes of a free government, rather than under those of a despotic monarch.

The farce was commenced by a letter from Governor Hislop to the white inhabitants, to enquire whether they would not prefer to live under the English instead of the Spanish laws. The answer was, of course, promptly given in the affirmative, and a petition to the British legislature was, in consequence, signed by about five hundred persons. In this stage of the business, the alarm was taken by the people of colour, a numerous body, who were aware that the projected change would deprive them of their rights, and expose them, defenceless, to all the caprices of tyranny. They, therefore, humbly requested to be allowed to petition, and state their case, to the government at home. Not only was this request refused, but, to punish them for their temerity, fifty of them were arrested, some of whom

were stripped of their property, and banished from the island. All opposition was silenced by so decisive a measure. That their fears of a change were, however, not groundless may reasonably be concluded, from a circumstance which, in the course of this year, occurred in the island of Barbadoes. The free people of colour in that colony petitioned to be rendered capable of appearing in the courts as legal witnessess; and, as a reason for granting their prayer, they stated that the whites often forcibly entered their dwellings, and violated their wives, with impunity, there being none of the inmates whom a court of justice would admit as evidence of the fact. The House of Assembly rejected this petition! The coloured population of Trinidad might well dread the introduction of a system which gave birth and protection to such enormous crimes.

The question was introduced to the House of Commons, on the 13th of June, 1811, by Mr. Marryat, who moved, "that it appears to this House to be expedient, for the better security of the liberty and property of his Majesty's subjects in the island of Trinidad, that the administration of justice, according to the laws of Spain be abolished, and that the laws of Great Britain be introduced in lieu thereof." The ground which he laid for his motion was, the gross abuses and inconsistencies which at present prevailed, from attempting to blend the two systems, the utter

impossibility of carrying them on together with any beneficial effect, and the manifest impropriety of retaining all the oppressive regulations of the Spanish law.

The motion was strenuously opposed by Mr. Brougham, Mr. Stephen, Mr. Canning, and Mr. Wilberforce. The manner in which the petition had been got up, and the motives of the petitioners, were closely scrutinized, and severely censured. The pretended love which the white colonists cherished for the British constitution was ridiculed with bitter scorn, as a pretence, a mockery, an insult. What part of the constitution was it that had won their affection? They were willing to relinquish their claim to a House of Assembly, and to be under the authority of a council, consisting of members appointed and removable by the crown; they were careful to provide that, as far as property was concerned, the Spanish laws should still be followed, and thus they showed that they were not so idolatrously fond of the British constitution as to purchase its charms at the dreadful expense of being compelled to the payment of their debts. From their own shewing, it clearly appeared what was the real object of their wishes. They wished to prevent the legislature at home from exercising any control over them; they wished to be at liberty to indulge in all the abuses by which the other islands were disgraced. Calling to the recol-

lection of his hearers the merits of the Spanish slave code, Mr. Brougham indignantly asked, whether "we were to depart from this model of perfection, and in its place adopt that under which Mr. Huggins scourged to death a miserable being, and was acquitted on evidence, which could not have proved satisfactory to any but the twelve slave drivers by whom he was tried and acquitted? When we talked of English law, we talked of it by reference to English judges, to English juries, and to English principles and feelings. It was a mockery to talk of transplanting the English law to the West Indies, when only the name was carried thither, and all the true English feeling was left behind. Then the law of England served only as the engine of fraud and oppression, rendered doubly disgraceful, because carried on under the pretence of law and justice. This was, under pretence of justice to the whites, to load the other miserable wretches with unbounded oppression."

These arguments prevailed, and, on the question being put, the motion was negatived without a division.

The case to which Mr. Brougham referred was indeed a flagrant proof of the blessed effects of a trial by jury in the West Indies. Huggins was a planter, of the island of Nevis, infamous for his cruelties, and who was strongly suspected of having murdered more than one of his negroes.

In daring breach of the law, called the Melioration Act, which was passed in 1798, and which prohibited night labour, this Huggins employed his slaves in carrying out dung at night into the fields. This illegal exaction was said to have produced some desertions, and some appearance of insubordination among the aggrieved negroes, but not one of them was guilty of any act of insurrection, of raising his hand against a white man, or even of uttering a contumacious expression. Huggins, however, resolved to take a severe vengeance for their offence. He caused two and thirty of them to be taken into the public market-place, and heavily flogged with cart whips by two drivers, while he himself stood by to enjoy their agonies. Several of his victims were women. Some of the men received as many as three hundred and sixty-five lashes; on one of the women two hundred and ninety-one lashes were inflicted. One of the female sufferers exclaimed that she was pregnant; but her punishment was, nevertheless, proceeded with. Though several magistrates, two of whom were of the clerical order, were within hearing, not one of them interfered to prevent this brutal outrage. The consequence of Huggins's brutality was, that many of the lacerated slaves suffered greatly from fevers, and that a female wasted away for some months, and then expired.

Shocked at this public insult to all the ho-

nourable feelings of human nature, the members of the House of Assembly of Nevis passed resolutions expressive of their abhorrence and detestation of its author, and they pledged themselves to promote the strictest investigation into that which they justly stigmatised as "a cruel proceeding, so disgraceful to humanity, so injurious to the fair character of the inhabitants, and so destructive to the best interests of the West India colonies." The president and the council concurred in these resolutions.

As there was a clause in the Melioration Act, by which cruelly whipping was made a punishable offence, Huggins was indicted and brought to trial. He did not attempt to deny what he had done; to do that would have been madness; but he pleaded an imperious necessity for so doing, which necessity, however, neither was nor could be proved. Even had his negroes been as guilty as he falsely stated them to be, he had not the less violated a positive statute. The jury was a packed one, packed with scarcely an attempt at concealment, and it was made up of the friends and dependents of the criminal. His counsel treated the Melioration Act with contempt, as being a mere deception, passed for the purpose of silencing the clamours of some individuals in England. The jury were manifestly of the same opinion with respect to it; for, in the teeth of the evidence, and of the law, they acquitted Huggins.

Not satisfied with this escape, he had even the daring impudence to prosecute for a libel the printer of the St. Christopher's Gazette, who, by order of the House, had published the resolutions of censure; and here again he obtained a verdict, the printer having been sentenced to a month's imprisonment, and the finding of securities for three years.

As soon as the British government was informed of these shameful occurrences, it made known, to the governor of the Leeward Islands, its indignant disgust at the gross violation of justice which the jury had committed, it ordered that the magistrates, who had not interfered to prevent the punishment of the slaves, should be removed with as much disgrace as possible, and it recommended that the colonial legislatures should adopt into their statute books that clause of the Jamaica restriction act, which restricted to the number of thirty-nine the lashes which a master might inflict upon his slave.

Close on the back of this case came another, which, though it terminated less fortunately for the criminal, showed, as plainly as the former had done, how unwise it would be to place any power in the hands of the colonists. In the little island of Tortola resided one Arthur Hodge, a member of the council, a man of liberal education, and of the most polished manners; but with a heart of such diabolical cruelty as almost

to stagger belief. In about three years his barbarity caused the death of at least sixty slaves. A brief narrative of his murders and cruelties fills several pages, and makes humanity shudder. Among other enormities, it seems to have been an amusement to him, to order children, of not more than nine years of age, to be taken up by the heels, dipped into tubs of water with their heads downwards, and kept there till they were stifled, after which they were taken out, suffered to recover and to breathe, and were then, over and over again, subjected to the same torment, till they staggered and fell: they were lastly suspended to a tree, by their hands tied together, and cart whipped for some time in the severest manner. In one instance a child died in consequence of his having ordered it to be dipped into a caldron of boiling liquor. This man, or more correctly speaking, this monster, had pursued his brutal career for a number of years, without being called to any account, or even being looked upon with any apparent disapprobation by his fellow planters. He might have gone down to his grave with as much peace as his conscience would allow him, had he not, among his many demerits, been a notorious duellist. In an evil hour for him, Hodge threw out some threats of calling into the field a magistrate who had till now been his friend, and, as the magistrate thought it a safer proceeding to hang his enemy than to

fight him, he preferred against him a charge for several murders, committed more than three years previously. Notwithstanding the counsel of Hodge boldly asserted that "a slave being property, it was no greater offence in law for his master to kill him than it would be to kill a dog," the jury, on the clearest evidence, found the culprit guilty of murder; but, although in his case there was nothing but circumstances of aggravation, a majority of the jurors thought proper to recommend him to mercy. This recommendation was very properly disregarded by Governor Elliot. But, such was the state of the colony, that, in order to prevent a rescue from being undertaken by the whites, the governor did not venture upon the execution of the criminal, till he had taken extraordinary precautions. He was under the necessity of going to Tortola himself, proclaiming martial law, calling out the militia, and availing himself of the presence of a frigate. It was not till he had done all this, that he could safely carry the sentence of the law into effect upon the flagitious murderer who was so extensively the object of Tortolan sympathy.

Such being the feelings inspired by exercising authority over slaves, it is no wonder that men of benevolent minds eagerly caught at every idea which could afford them even the slightest hope of diminishing the number of the enslaved. With the declared view of ultimately eradicating

negro slavery from the colonies, Mr. Barham, in the session of 1811, moved for a committee to report upon the practicability and expediency of supplying our West-India possessions with free labourers from the east. On this occasion Mr. Stephen expressed his belief that no benefit could arise from the plan; it being impossible for slavery and free labour to co-exist. Besides, the plan had, he said, been tried in Trinidad, and the result had been a failure. Though, like Mr. Stephen, many persons doubted whether any good was to be expected from the scheme, the committee was appointed, and it made a report on the subject. The report was, on the whole, of an unfavourable kind; for, while it admitted that considerable advantages might, perhaps, be gained by introducing Chinese labourers into the west, it represented as being all but insuperable the difficulties which must be contended with in carrying the system into effect. Nothing was, therefore, done.

The naval commanders and the governors of the settlements on the African coast continued, meanwhile, to exert themselves actively in the suppression of the trade. Many vessels were seized and condemned, and sentence, under the act of 1811, was passed upon some British subjects, who were detected in carrying on the traffic. The African Institution also persevered in its humane labours. One beneficial effect of

its vigilance was the putting an end to a slave trade which was discovered to be going on, to a considerable extent, between Egypt and Malta. Its attention was equally directed to all other quarters where abuses were in existence. The government was no less alive to its duty, and readily lent its aid to every practicable measure which was suggested by the friends of the abolition. The establishment of a registry of slaves in the island of Trinidad was among the most important of its acts. This was done by an order of council, of the 26th of March, 1812. An effectual check, as far as regarded Trinidad, was thus given to illicit importation. In the following year, the government gave another proof of its zeal in the cause. Sweden having joined the confederacy for the liberation of Europe, Great Britain consented to cede to her the island of Guadaloupe, as a reward for her services. It was, however, stipulated with his Swedish majesty, that the slave trade should be abolished in all his West Indian possessions, and that no Swedish subject should thenceforth be permitted to engage in it. In the House of Commons, copies of all the colonial laws were laid upon the table, in consequence of a motion by Mr. William Smith. A bill was also passed, for allowing the privileges of British registry to vessels condemned for trading in slaves.

In the summer of 1813, the cause of hu-

manity sustained a severe loss by the decease of one of the most illustrious and venerable of its friends. Full of years and of honour, Mr. Granville Sharp closed, on the sixth of July, a life of piety and of active benevolence. His funeral was attended by a deputation from the African Institution, and by some of its leading members, and a monument, commemorative of his exertions and his virtues, was afterwards erected in Westminster Abbey, at the expense of the Society.

The long struggle of the European states against the tyranny of France was at length terminated by the downfal of Napoleon. This was a critical moment. Now that peace was about to be re-established, it was of the utmost importance that every nerve should be strained to gain the consent of the continental sovereigns to the suppression of the trade. If this consent were not to be obtained, it was much to be feared that the restoration of the blessings of tranquillity to Europe would be the signal for the commission of fresh crimes in Africa. The friends of the abolition were, therefore, exceedingly anxious that the British negociator should be instructed to exert all the influence of his country, to procure a general convention of the European powers, for the total renunciation of the trade.

To forward this great object, addresses to the Prince Regent were voted by both Houses of

Parliament. That of the Commons was moved by Mr. Wilberforce, on the third of May; that of the Lords was proposed, on the fifth of the same month, by Lord Grenville. They were carried without a single dissentient voice. Both of them were eloquent compositions, and spoke a language which well became the legislature of a free and high-spirited people. In concluding their address, "we humbly trust," said the Commons, that in the moral order by which Divine Providence administers the government of the world, this great act of atonement to Africa may contribute to consolidate the safety and prolong the tranquillity of Europe;—that nations may be taught a higher respect for justice and humanity by the example of their sovereigns; and that a treaty sanctified by such disinterested and sacred stipulations may be more profoundly reverenced, and more religiously observed, than even the most equitable compacts for the regulation of power or the distribution of territory." "No worthier thanks, we confidently believe," said the Peers, "can be offered to Providence for past protection; on no better grounds can future blessings be solicited, than by the recognition and discharge of the great duties which we all owe alike to the rights, the liberty, and the happiness of our fellow-creatures." To each of these addresses a favourable answer was given by the Prince Regent.

Considering the sacrifices which Great Britain had been compelled to make, to resist the ambitious designs of her ancient rival, considering, too, those which she was now called upon to make to that rival, by the restitution of colonies gained at such a price of blood and treasure, it was reasonably to be hoped, that, in return, France would readily agree to relinquish a trade of which she had, in fact, been long deprived, and the renewal of which could not fail to throw upon her character an additional disgrace. It was, surely, to be hoped that, after having devastated Europe from the one end to the other, and having generously been spared when she lay prostrate at the feet of those whom she had so deeply injured, she would not have the hardihood to demand a licence to extend her ravages to the shores of Africa; that she would at least be ashamed of exclaiming "give me the blood of the blacks, since I can no longer shed that of the whites." Such hopes were, in reality, indulged. It was, therefore, with mingled feelings of disappointment, indignation and disgust, that the people of England perused that article of the treaty of peace by which France was allowed to carry on the slave-trade for the term of five years. Nor was any one deceived by the semblance of restriction which was held out in the words "five years." It was obvious that France intended, if possible, to persist in the accursed traffic till

the end of time. That nothing might, on this occasion, be wanting to crown the disgrace of France, this very article confessed the trade to be "a description of traffic repugnant to the principles of natural justice, and of the enlightened age in which we live." The love of gain, or of sheer barbarity, must indeed have been boundless in the French, when they could submit to indulge it at the expense of so much infamy as they heaped upon themselves by this strange avowal.

As soon as the treaty became public, the directors of the African Institution hastened to call a meeting of the friends of the abolition. This meeting, which was held at Freemason's Hall, was numerously attended, and many persons of the highest talent and rank were present: the Duke of Gloucester was in the chair. Fifteen resolutions were passed. They expressed the regret of the meeting, that France should have been permitted to renew a system of robbery and murder, which, as far as regarded herself, had for many years been practically extinct; pointed out the fatal consequences of this concession; called upon the government to use its efforts, at the approaching congress, to do away with the trade, or to circumscribe it within as narrow limits as possible; and directed that a petition should be presented to both Houses of Parliament, praying them to adopt such measures as to their

wisdom might seem meet, for obviating the various evils which were now the subject of alarm and complaint.

The directors of the African Institution having been requested to employ their efforts to carry into full effect the objects of the meeting, they cheerfully undertook the task. They appointed a committee of their own body, to which they invited many friends of the abolition, who lent a zealous aid. Mr. Clarkson was elected as their chairman. The committee continued sitting every day for a month, and opened a correspondence with almost every town in the kingdom. Responsive to the call which was made on them, the people rushed forward, as one man, to express their abhorrence of the trade, and their regret that the horrors of it were about to be renewed on the part of France. Each individual may be said to have felt as if he had a personal interest in this important question. This strong manifestation of public feeling was honourable to our country. In the short space of time that was allowed for the purpose of petitioning, eight hundred and six petitions were sent up to the legislature, and they were signed by nearly a million of the adult male inhabitants of Great Britain and Ireland. The signatures from the metropolis alone were little short of two hundred thousand.

In the House of Commons, on the twenty-

seventh of June, Mr. Wilberforce moved an address to the Prince Regent. This address was grounded on the resolutions of the meeting at Freemason's Hall, and it particularly prayed that every exertion might be made, to obtain some further concessions at the approaching congress. Mr. Barham was desirous to add, as an amendment, "that an immediate renunciation of the slave-trade may be effected in return for any cession, consistent with the honour of this country, which may be agreed on by his Majesty's government, in concurrence with his Majesty's allies." This amendment, however, he withdrew, and the address was unanimously voted. The deeply rooted prejudices existing in France, and the impossibility of prevailing on the French ministry to yield any thing more on the subject of the trade, were the arguments by which Lord Castlereagh vindicated that article of the treaty which had occasioned such general dissatisfaction. In fact the ministers, in both Houses, plainly hinted, that to have insisted on better terms with respect to the abolition, would certainly have been productive of the continuance of the war. This obstinacy on the side of the French, Lord Castlereagh attributed to their jealousy of England, and their deplorable want of knowledge. They, he said, imagined that our anxiety on this head did not arise from benevolence, but from a wish to injure their commerce, and fetter their colonies;

and such was the deficiency of political information among them, that, in the internal parts of the kingdom, the inhabitants were absolutely ignorant that the slave-trade was abolished in the British possessions. A similar address was moved in the House of Lords, on the thirtieth of June, by the Marquis of Lansdowne, and was adopted without any opposition.

Two other addresses, the one proposed to the Peers by Lord Grenville, the other to the Commons by Mr. Horner, had a different fate. They called for the production of copies of the papers which had passed, relative to the trade, during the late negociation; and they were opposed, on the ground that, as the negociation was still pending, the granting of the papers might be attended with public inconvenience. The motions were consequently negatived. A protest against the rejection of the address was entered on the Journals of the House, by the Dukes of Sussex and Gloucester, and several other peers.

Though the friends of humanity sustained a heavy disappointment by the censurable conduct of France, or of her government, they received some consolation from the praise-worthy conduct of other powers. Denmark had long abandoned the traffic. She now went further, and, by the treaty of Kiel, of the fourteenth of January, 1814, she agreed to prohibit her subjects, in the

most effectual manner, and by the strongest laws, from taking any share in it. A still more gratifying triumph was gained, on the fourteenth of June, by a decree of the government of Holland, which prohibited all Dutch subjects from engaging in the trade, and ordered the governors of the Dutch forts on the coasts of Africa to suffer no slave trading to be carried on within their jurisdiction, by the ships of any nation; and to seize all Dutch ships that might attempt to contravene the decree. This decree was expressly said to be granted in compliance with the wishes of the Prince Regent. Lastly, the United States of America, which, also, had previously relinquished the traffic, now, by the treaty of Ghent, which was signed on the twenty-fourth of December, branded it as being irreconcilable with the principles of humanity and justice, and promised to co-operate with Great Britain, in using their best endeavours to accomplish its entire abolition.

As the ignorance of the French people had been pleaded in excuse of their alleged unnatural attachment to the slave-trade, the directors of the African Institution deemed it both just and politic to endeavour to enlighten them upon the subject. Great exertions were, therefore, made, in distributing among them such publications as were best calculated to increase their knowledge. Several of the directors and members, among

whom was Mr. Clarkson, were for some time actively occupied at Paris, in the furtherance of this important object.

The British government, meanwhile, was not idle. In August, the Duke of Wellington was directed to solicit a particular audience of Louis the Eighteenth, for the purpose of presenting, from the Prince Regent, a letter, in which his Royal Highness strenuously intreated the French monarch to concur in delivering Africa from the long train of evils which was inseparable from such an inhuman traffic. A part of the reply of the monarch was as satisfactory as mere words could be. He candidly admitted, that the traffic "tended to the destruction of mankind;" and he promised to subject it to restrictions and discouragements, and not to delay its absolute abolition "further than might appear necessary to prevent any ill effects from the precipitation of the measure." Ominous words were these last, which completely rendered nugatory all his fair professions. It should be borne in remembrance that, at this moment, the trade did not exist; and that, therefore, it was an insult to common sense to talk of the ill effects which might arise from its precipitate abolition. That nothing might be left undone on the part of Great Britain, her ambassador was also instructed to offer to the French government, either a sum of money, or the cession of an island in the West

Indies. The money was intended to be applied as a compensation for any losses which the French colonists might be supposed to have sustained by the suppression of the trade. Than such a step as this, nothing could more strongly prove the humane and disinterested spirit of this country. Even this liberal offer was made in vain. All that the Duke of Wellington could procure, and this indeed was worth procuring, was an injunction, issued by the minister of marine, by which the trade was prohibited from being extended to the north of Cape Formosa, a point which is situated in about four degrees of north latitude. Northern Africa, at least, was thus saved from the desolating attacks of the French slave merchants. It is manifest, however, that the injunction of the minister of the marine, though of considerable present benefit, was by no means a measure which could give full satisfaction, it being liable to be withdrawn, at any moment, at the pleasure of the minister.

At the congress of Vienna, the offer of cession or compensation was renewed by Lord Castlereagh, the British plenipotentiary, and was again declined by France. The general question gave rise to many debates, in which the ministers of Austria, Russia, Prussia, and Sweden, threw their weight into the scale of Lord Castlereagh. The first step of his Lordship was to obtain, after a feeble opposition from the Spanish minister, a

declaration, expressive of their common desire for an universal abolition of the trade. The next was to endeavour to bring about an immediate suppression of the traffic. In this he failed. France obstinately persisted in refusing to abridge the term which had been previously fixed; nor would Spain or Portugal agree to mention a shorter term than eight years. Desirous of circumscribing as much as possible the limits within which the trade was, in future, to be carried on, his Lordship laboured to have the equator assigned as the line of demarcation on the north. Portugal alone, of the three interested powers, acceded to this proposition. She did not, however, do so quite gratuitously. By a convention, signed on the twenty-first of January, 1815, she stipulated to receive the sum of three hundred thousand pounds, as an indemnification for the losses which she had sustained by the seizure of her slave vessels since the conclusion of the treaty of 1810. This was the penalty which Great Britain paid for having allowed that treaty to be worded in such ambiguous terms. The convention was followed by a treaty, signed on the next day, which made the equator the northern boundary of the Portuguese slave traffic, and restricted that traffic to the supply of the trans-Atlantic dominions of Portugal. This, however, was not granted without a further pecuniary sacrifice on the part of this country; it being stipulated, that whatever

remained unpaid of the loan raised in England, in the year 1809, should not be claimed by the British government.

Two other propositions were brought forward to the congress by Lord Castlereagh. The first was, that the governments should agree to act in concert to preclude an illegal traffic, and that their ministers, at London and Paris, should draw up, yearly, a general report, founded on the latest information, as to the state of the trade, and the progress of the abolition. The second was of a still more important kind. The measure which it recommended was meant to operate as a punishment upon any state which should protract the carrying on of the traffic beyond the period which, by the first additional article of the treaty of Paris, was fixed on for its termination. It proposed that the colonial produce of that state should be prohibited from being received into the dominions of the other powers. The first article was strenuously resisted by Spain; the second, with equal vehemence, by Spain and Portugal. They were, however, warmly supported by Austria, Russia, and Prussia. The last act of the congress, as far as respected the slave-trade, was to issue against it a declaration, stigmatizing it as having "desolated Africa, degraded Europe, and afflicted humanity;" and promising to adopt the most effectual means to put an end to it, as speedily as circumstances

would allow. In this manifesto against the trade all the plenipotentiaries concurred.

From Spain, by a negociation carried on between the two courts, the British government could, for the present, obtain nothing more than a sterile confession of the injustice and inhumanity of the traffic; an engagement to prohibit Spanish subjects from supplying any other than Spanish possessions, and an engagement to prevent the Spanish flag from being used as a protection to foreign traders; and, at length, a positive promise that the trade should not be continued beyond the term of eight years. With a perversity, however, for which it is difficult to account, Spain was anxious to make the space between the equator and the tenth degree of north latitude the scene of her licensed ravages; an arrangement which was vigorously opposed by the British government, on the solid ground of that portion of territory being precisely the spot to which Great Britain had long been directing her efforts for the improvement of Africa.

It has been seen that the reason assigned for permitting France to renew the traffic, and to continue it for five years, was the absolute necessity of not running counter to the prejudices of the French people, who were represented as having, some how or other, contracted an affection for a commerce in slaves, and as being too ignorant to perceive that the commerce was a crime. A

stupendous event, which now occurred, proved, among other things, the futility, not to say the intentional falsehood, of this reason. Napoleon Buonaparté reascended the throne of France. One of his first acts of authority was the putting forth a decree, by which the slave-trade was, from that moment, abolished. That his great purpose in taking this step was a hope of conciliating England, cannot rationally be doubted. But it is equally certain that, situated as he then was, he would not have ventured to take it, had the mass of the French people been really hostile to such a measure. He was not, as he once was, the despotic disposer of the lives and properties of the French; yet, though others of his operations were freely canvassed, no opposition was excited by his suppression of the traffic in slaves. It appears, therefore, that, at least, the ministers of Louis the Eighteenth had, with a culpable want of discernment, mistaken the sordid clamours of a few interested individuals for the deliberate voice of a whole people.

Mainly by the powerful instrumentality of England, Napoleon was soon precipitated from his newly-recovered throne. The circumstances were now highly favourable for obtaining from the re-established sovereign, Louis the Eighteenth, that concession which his ministers had hitherto so pertinaciously refused. It was intimated to Prince Talleyrand, in a letter from

Lord Castlereagh, that England looked upon the trade as being abolished by the law of France, and incapable of being revived without a specific order of the monarch; at all events, whatever construction might be put upon the law, it was hoped that the king of France would never lend his authority to such revival. This gave rise to a correspondence between the two governments, the result of which was that, though it was denied that the acts of Napoleon were at all binding, Louis the Eighteenth gave his full assent that, "on the part of the French, the traffic in slaves should cease from the present time everywhere and for ever." Some consolation was thus afforded to humanity for the bloodshed which had been caused by the daring enterprise of Napoleon.

That some benefit had been produced by the various writings which the African Institution had caused to be distributed in France, there is every reason to believe. But, when it is considered what a short time had elapsed since they began to be circulated, credulity itself can scarcely suppress a doubting smile, on hearing the assertion of Prince Talleyrand, that the prejudices of his countrymen "had been attacked in several late publications, and with such effect, as to afford his Majesty the satisfaction of now following without reserve the dictates of his inclination."

Though by this letter, and by the subsequent treaty of the thirtieth of November, Louis the Eighteenth had promised that the slave-trade should be immediately abolished, the only step which he took towards the performance of his promise was the issuing of an ordinance, prohibiting the introduction of slaves into his colonies, and even this ordinance was not published till the eighth of January, 1817. For any beneficial purpose this paper was obviously a mere nullity. French vessels were consequently employed, to a great extent, in carrying on the commerce. From the river Senegal alone, before the end of the first year of the re-occupation of the settlements there by France, more slaves had been exported than in any two years previously to the revolutionary war. Some of the vessels were seized by our cruisers, but were released by the Court of Admiralty, on the ground that there was no known law of France which rendered the traffic penal. The British government now saw the necessity of procuring something effectual to be done. In consequence of the discussion which took place between the two courts, a law was passed by the French legislature, in March, 1818, and sanctioned by the monarch, which interdicts the slave-trade, under severe penalties, to all persons, whether foreigners or subjects of France. This law, however, has not yet produced its full effect; the traffic being still persisted

in, and that with circumstances of extraordinary barbarity, by vessels under French colours. This has recently been made a subject of complaint in Parliament, by Mr. Wilberforce, who moved an address to the Prince Regent, but withdrew his motion, on the assurance of Lord Castlereagh, that the French government was sincerely disposed to enforce the law, and to punish the crimes which had been committed on the coast of Africa. It is, nevertheless, much to be feared that, unless the right of searching merchant vessels be granted by France, her subjects will, in many instances, be enabled to violate the law with almost certain impunity.

Such a right has been conceded by other powers. By an additional treaty signed on the 23d of July, 1817, for the purpose of preventing an illicit traffic in slaves, Great Britain and Portugal mutually yield, to the ships of war of each other, the right of searching vessels suspected of having slaves on board. This example was followed by Spain, on the 23d of September 1817. In consideration of the payment of £400,000, for vessels captured from her subjects, that power agreed to relinquish immediately the trade to the north of the equator, to abolish the trade entirely in the year 1820, and to grant the right of search. For these valuable, and almost unexpected concessions from Spain, the cause of humanity is perhaps indebted to a treaty on the

slave trade, by Mr. Blanco White, of which a considerable number of copies [illegible] distributed among the leading members of the Spanish monarchy by the African Institution. The last power by which the principle of search was granted was the kingdom of the Netherlands, with which a treaty for preventing the subjects of the two countries from engaging in the slave trade, was concluded on the 4th of May, 1818. America also has since manifested a disposition to concur with the European states in whatever measures may be necessary to complete the destruction of the trade.

While these measures were in progress, some amelioration of the state of things took place in the colonies themselves. In more than one instance signs appeared that an unwonted spirit of liberality had arisen in the minds of the colonists. The supreme court in the island of St. Vincent's gave a solemn decision against the long maintained principle that a black man must be taken to be a slave till legal proof had been given of the contrary. As the law formerly stood, any free black might be imprisoned, and sold within a limited time, if he failed to prove his right to freedom; a proof which, in very many instances, it was clearly impossible for him to furnish. This decision was obtained by the exertions of Mr. Keane, an individual well known for his active benevolence. In Jamaica, the legislature readily

repealed certain statutes which operated to the serious injury of the free coloured people of that island.

In some of the eastern colonies still more was accomplished. In Java a society, called the "Java Benevolent Institution," was established, the purpose of which was the prevention of the slave trade, and the eventual abolition of slavery in the numerous islands of the Indian seas. It is to be hoped that our impolitic restoration of that colony will not frustrate the humane labours of the Java Institution. To Ceylon, however, must be awarded the prize in the glorious race of humanity. In 1816, all the leading proprietors of slaves came to a resolution, that the children born of slaves, subsequently to the 12th of August in that year, should be entitled to freedom. The chief-justice of Ceylon, Sir Alexander Johnston, was the person through whose continued exertions, for ten years, this desirable measure was at length adopted by the colonists of Ceylon. St. Helena has recently followed this noble example.

Here, then, in strictness, might be closed the history of the abolition of the slave-trade. It may not, however, be unnecessary to notice briefly two measures which are connected with the subject; one of which excited much attention in the parliament and the public, and gave rise to boundless clamour and spleen on the part of the colonists.

The first of these measures was a bill, which in the session of 1815, was brought into the House of Commons, by Mr. Barham, for the purpose of "prohibiting British subjects, or persons resident in the united kingdom, from lending capital, or doing other acts, to assist in carrying on the slave-trade to colonies belonging to foreign states; or persons residing in this country from lending capital, or committing other acts, the tendency of which was to assist in carrying on the slave trade of foreign colonies."

The well-known fact that British capital, to a large amount, was thus employed, was the reason assigned by Mr. Barham for his introducing this bill. Some of the clauses were opposed by Mr. Baring, and one of them was amended at his suggestion, but the bill was carried through the Commons without any serious opposition. In the Lords, however, the case was different. The bill was warmly spoken against in all its stages. Among its opponents were the Earl of Westmoreland, the Lord Chancellor, and Lord Ellenborough. The latter was particularly severe upon it, as being a crude, unjust, unmerciful, production, which it was almost impossible to reduce into any thing like a proper shape, and which was, in fact, "an emanation of that fanatical irregularity of mind, which would render that excellent measure, the abolition of the slave-trade, odious in the eyes of the West Indian colonists."

The bill was finally rejected by twenty-four voices against nineteen.

But of all the plans which have of late years been under the consideration of parliament, none, not even excepting the abolition itself, ever called forth a more determined spirit of hostility than a bill introduced by Mr. Wilberforce, towards the close of the session of 1815, for the registry of the slaves in the West Indies. It has been seen that the scheme of registration was first carried into effect, in Trinidad, by the British ministry. The measure was subsequently extended to St. Lucia and the Isle of France. Under the idea that they had sufficient reasons to believe that slaves were smuggled into the islands, the friends of the abolition deemed it necessary to procure a law directing a general registry of slaves to take place in the whole of the colonies. Mr. Wilberforce accordingly brought in a bill, which was ordered to be printed, and to stand over till the following session.

No sooner did the bill appear than all the colonists took the alarm. An invasion or a general rebellion could not have roused them more effectually. The colonial legislatures reprobated the scheme with all the asperity of censure; committees were appointed to consider the question; voluminous and angry reports were made by those committees; meetings were called; strong resolutions were entered into; the registry bill

was deprecated as being absurd, contradictory, impracticable, unjust, unnecessary, oppressive, unconstitutional, and a gross insult upon the colonial proprietors; the power of the mother-country to legislate in this case for the colonies was peremptorily denied; and, in some instances, language of a threatening nature was freely used. In England the press was vigorously employed by the opponents of the bill, and a swarm of pamphlets issued from it, which were more remarkable for their virulence than for their beauty of style, or their cogency of argument. The friends of the bill, in their turn, wielded the same weapon, and with no weak or unwilling hand, and thus a furious paper war was waged between the two parties for a considerable period.

While this contest was carrying on, an event occurred, which gave to the enemies of the bill an advantage over their antagonists. This was an insurrection in Barbadoes, which the colonists and their advocates in England, attributed entirely to Mr. Wilberforce's bill. Accordingly when, on the 19th of June, 1816, after having previously announced his intention to press forward the bill at a future season, Mr. Wilberforce moved an address to the Prince Regent, to obtain certain papers, the colonial party in the House, of which Mr. Pallmer was, on this occasion, the leader, moved, as an amendment, an address requesting his Royal Highness to make known his

highest displeasure at the late daring insurrection. At the same time, probably as a sort of peace offering to the friends of the abolition, the amendment entreated that his "Royal Highness would also be graciously pleased to recommend, in the strongest manner, to the local authorities in the respective colonies, to carry into effect every measure which may tend to promote the moral and religious improvement, as well as the comfort and happiness of the negroes."

A long and animated debate ensued. Mr. Pallmer, Mr. Barham, Mr. Watson Taylor, Mr. A. C. Grant, and Mr. Manning, were on the one side; Mr. Wilberforce, Sir Samuel Romilly, and Mr. Brougham on the other. Mr. Ponsonby and Mr. Canning also were in favour of the amended address, which, under the peculiar circumstances of the case, they thought it would be politic to adopt unanimously.

By the supporters of the amendment, it was argued that no illicit importation whatever had taken place, or was likely to do so; that the registry bill was every thing of oppressive and offensive and unjust, that the colonists and their writer had stated it to be; and that the whole of the recent mischief had been occasioned by the introduction of the bill, which bill the slaves had been taught to believe was a measure designed to restore them to freedom, of the benefits of which they

were fraudulently deprived by their tyrannical owners.

In answer to this, it was contended that, whatever danger had been incurred, it had been incurred entirely by the glaringly imprudent language which the planters in the colonies had daily and publicly held upon the subject; that there was sufficient reason to suspect that smuggling had been carried on; that the friends of the traffic had themselves always asserted that smuggling could not be prevented; that if, as they had maintained, it could not be put down in time of war, still less could it, in time of peace, without the use of more than common means; and that, in fact, the preventing of it would be almost impossible, if the plan of registration were not adopted. It was, in truth, not a little curious to hear the advocates of the planters admitting, as they now did, that their former arguments, built on the certainty of illicit importation being resorted to, were false and hollow, and were only intended to add something to the weight of their general reasoning. They did not, however, seem at all aware, that this admission went very far towards invalidating their present assertions.

Yielding to the wishes of his friends, Mr. Wilberforce consented to allow the address of Mr. Pallmer to be voted first, and without opposition. He then brought forward his

motion for papers, which was seconded by Mr. Canning, and agreed to by the House.

In the course of a few days, Lord Holland moved, in the House of Peers, an address similar to that to which, on the motion of Mr. Pallmer, the Commons had assented; but with an additional recommendation to the colonists, "to make every necessary provision against any violation of the abolition acts, under the facilities which may be afforded by the return of peace."

The speech of his Lordship was distinguished by ability and moderation. He was of opinion that, although the British Parliament had an undoubted right to interfere, it would be prudent to waive the exercise of the right, till there appeared to be a positive necessity for calling it into action. The measure of a registration of slaves he thought a just and politic one; and he believed that the resistance which the bill had met with had originated rather in the feelings excited by the reasons assigned for pressing it, than in any sound cause of dislike to the measure itself. He was, therefore, in the first instance, for leaving to the colonial assemblies the passing of the requisite enactments. "The governments in the colonies," said he, "ought to know, that it is impossible for them long to resist the adoption of such a measure. But it should be done in the manner most consonant to their feelings, as the most effectual manner in

which the thing can be done. If, however, they should still hesitate, or decline the performance of their duty in that respect, they should know, that it will be done for them, with a great deal more danger to themselves, and to the authorities of the islands. I hope, therefore, my Lords, they will set about it while it remains in their power; and I think that the inhabitants of the West Indies should be told, that it is possible for them to avoid the alternative. They should be told of the general opinion, particularly of public men, as well as of the Parliament, in this country; and that the non-compliance of their own authorities will force the British legislature to the adoption of a measure which I, my Lords, for one, would not advise a recurrence to but in the last necessity; while the adoption of it on the part of the colonies can be of no possible inconvenience to them." The address proposed by his Lordship was carried without a dissenting voice.

In the hope that this sort of language would produce the proper effect, Mr. Wilberforce and his friends forebore to bring the Registry Bill once more under the notice of Parliament. The government, on its side, in dispatches to the governors of the islands, and in interviews with the agents of those islands, forcibly urged the adoption of such precautionary measures by the colonial assemblies, as would render it needless to call into exercise the paramount authority of

the British Parliament. Most of the colonial assemblies have, in consequence, passed acts of registration, and there is little doubt that the same step will, at length, be taken by them all. It is to be hoped that their acts will be effectual in their provisions; that they will be strictly enforced; and, above all, that the planters, by their justice, wisdom, and benevolence, will, henceforth, induce the slaves to look up to and venerate them as protectors, instead of dreading and detesting them as merciless tyrants.

The slave-trade has received a mortal wound. Its days are numbered, and the number of them is but few. The dying monster, however, displays in its last agonies even more malignity than it did, when it existed in all its unnatural and horrible vigour. It seems desirous to crowd into its expiring moments the enjoyment of as large a portion as possible of deep and damning crime. It acts like those savages who, though transfixed to the ground, are said to endeavour to bite and tear the limbs of their conquerors. "The slave-trade of the present day," say the directors of the African Institution, in their last report, "has acquired a new character of ferocity. The slave-ships come on the coast armed, not merely for the ordinary purposes of their murderous traffic, but in order to resist search; and many bloody scenes have in consequence of this determination been acted of late in Africa.

They appear also to lose no opportunity of attacking and destroying the legitimate commerce of the Windward Coast, and particularly that of Sierra Leone, which enjoys the proud pre-eminence of being the object of their bitter hatred and implacable hostility." Deplorable and disgusting as this is, the evil can only be of transient duration. The time cannot be far distant, when an adequate British force will hunt down and severely punish these desperate revolters against nature and the laws; when the continent of Africa will be suffered to breathe from the carnage and horrors to which it has so long been exposed; and the wishes of the friends of humanity will, at length, be gratified, by the wide and unrestrained diffusion of the blessings of civilization and of peace.

Extract from a Statement relative to the Outrages committed on the innocent Traffic of Africa, by Ships engaged in the Slave Trade, drawn up from authentic Documents.

"DURING the last two years many armed Slave-ships have come to the coast, and have employed force to effectuate their purpose; and, when interrupted, they have threatened to return with armed ships, of a large class; and, in some instances, have executed their threats.

A few of these armed ships have come from the Brazils, and one or two from Martinique, but for the most part they have come from the United States of America, having first obtained a Spanish disguise at the Havannah. They have consisted chiefly of vessels which had been employed as American privateers during the late war, and which sail uncommonly fast. In more than one instance they have come in small squadrons of two or three vessels, for the purposes of attacking and capturing any armed vessel which might obstruct their proceedings.

A few of the cases are stated below.

1. *The Temeraire.*—This vessel came from the Brazils, and bore the Portuguese flag. She mounted eighteen guns, and was strongly manned. She resisted his Majesty's ship Bann, and was not taken until she had suffered greatly in her sails and rigging.

2. *The Seal,* Portuguese.—This vessel was found trading in the river Lagos, under Portuguese colours, in August, 1815. She was strongly manned and armed, and maintained an engagement of forty minutes with the vessel

which attempted to examine her. The River Lagos is to the *North* of the Line.

3. *The Rose.*—This vessel came to the coast under Spanish colours, although really American property. She was formerly an American privateer, belonging to Baltimore; whence she was sent to the Havannah, under the command of a person who knew at the time that she was destined for the coast of Africa. She was sold at the Havannah to a Spaniard, who dispatched her in a few days to the coast; the former commander still remaining on board as super-cargo, and taking with him the same cargo he had brought from America, and several of the same crew. She was strongly manned and armed, and did not yield to his Majesty's ship Bann, until after a considerable resistance. This was in January 1816.

4. *The Louis.*—This vessel was from Martinique, and was well armed and manned. She was detained by his Majesty's colonial ship, Princess Charlotte, but not without a severe contest, in which twenty of the crew of the Princess Charlotte were killed or wounded. This was in March, 1816.

5 *Two armed Schooners,* names unknown, under Spanish colours, resisted and beat off the Princess Charlotte, and carried off from the Windward coast cargoes of slaves. This was in July, 1815.

6. *La Paz.*—This vessel bore the Spanish flag. She was taken after a severe contest, by the Princess Charlotte; and on board of her were found the master and crew of an English vessel that had been captured by her some days before.

7. *The Rayo.*—This vessel from Charlestown and the Havannah; was strongly armed; and was captured in March, 1816, after fighting for a considerable time.

8. *A large Schooner,* from the Havannah, with slaves on board, attacked his Majesty's ship Ferret, and killed two of her men; but was at length taken, and brought into Sierra Leone, in March, 1816.

9. *The Schooner* (name unknown) whose crew destroyed the brig Kitty, of Liverpool, murdered the master (Roach), and carried the black people (two of whom were captured negroes of Sierra Leone) as slaves to the Havannah.

10. *The Camperdoun*, a brig of sixteen guns, and a large complement of men, commanded by the same person as the preceding. She destroyed the sloops Rambler and Trial, belonging to this port, and carried the blacks off as slaves. It is supposed that she carried off at least two hundred free blacks in her different voyages, as she made slaves of all the people going on board in canoes. She had several skirmishes with the Princess Charlotte, and was once chased by the Creole and Astrea.

11. *The Laura Anna*, taken in the Rio Nunez, where it was necessary to promise the sailors their wages, to prevent an action.

12. *The Venganza*, which fought the party sent after her to the Gambia, and at last was blown up whilst engaging.

13. *The Mulatto*, a large schooner, painted black, which made two or three voyages to the coast, carried away a great number of free negroes, and beat off the Princess Charlotte.

14. *A large Schooner*, likewise painted black, her companion, which also beat off the Princess Charlotte.

15. *The Paz*, which, under the American flag, beat off the Princess Charlotte, and killed several of her men.

16. *The Rose*, formerly an American privateer: fitted out in America, and manned with Americans, but supposed to be the property of an English passenger on board, who was an old slave trader at Mesurado, from which place she slaved: fought the boats of his Majesty's ship Bann and the commissioned sloop Mary for some time, but was at length captured.

17. *Schooner Guadaloupe*, taken by the Young Princess

Charlotte. Besides their regular charge of two round shot, her guns were each of them loaded with bags of five hundred musket balls She was taken by boarding

18. *Brig Temerario,* from Brazil. She was built on purpose for this forced trade: has eighteen guns, which were cast on purpose, with her name on them. She made one trip to the coast, when she was chased by the Princess Charlotte, but escaped. On her second trip she was taken, after an action of two hours, by his Majesty's ship Bann. She had a complement of eighty men, and was slaving in violation of the last treaty with Portugal.

19. *Schooner Dolores,* formerly an American schooner, but said to belong to an English house in the Havannah. Taken after a severe action, by his Majesty's ship Ferret.

20 *Brig Neuva Paz,* formerly the American privateer Argus: fitted out from America, though supposed in part to be British property, and manned with Americans and English. She took and plundered the schooner Apollo of this port, and made an attack on the Prince Regent, but was captured by boarding, after a short but severe action.

21. *Schooner Carmen,* from Brazil. taken by the Sir James Yeo, for slaving to the North of the Line. She had a flag with a death's head and marrow bones

22. *Schooner Triumfante,* from Havannah, late the American privateer Criterion, of sixteen guns and men, commanded by a Portuguese subject. Taken by the boats of the Prince Regent, after a severe action, in the river Cameroons. The captain declared, that, had he been fully prepared, and met the Prince Regent at sea, he would have sunk her.

23. *The American Schooner Dorset,* of guns and men, from Baltimore direct—called the Spanish schooner Triumvirata—with an American supercargo, a Spanish captain, and American, French, English, and Spanish crew. Taken after a smart action, in the Rio Pongas, last January, by a vessel from this place.

24. *A large Schooner*, name unknown, supposed from the Havannah: took and plundered the brig Industry of this port, last November, and carried the greatest part of the crew off as slaves.

25. *The Saucy Jack*, an American privateer, which carried off a cargo of slaves in 1814, and, it is believed, convoyed several vessels to and from the coast. He boarded, but did not molest, a sloop from this place to Goree with rice.

These are specific instances, which have all been proved before some court of justice; and there is every probability that this is only a small proportion of the vessels of this description which visit the coast for the purpose of carrying on the slave trade.

It has also lately become the practice of these vessels to sail in company, and thus deter the crews of his Majesty's vessels from attempting to capture them.

When interrupted, the captains have almost universally threatened to return with armed ships of a larger class, although, from the universality of the trade, it is difficult to remember every particular instance. The Neuva Paz was one where the threat was put in execution; and one of the most violent of the slave-traders has very lately returned to the Gallinas, and sent up a message, by an American, that he was waiting for the Prince Regent: unfortunately she was then unrigged, and repairing, at Bance Island, which gave this slave captain an opportunity of carrying off a cargo. The Dolores and Temerario were avowedly fitted out for the destruction of the colonial brig; and there can be no doubt but that very violent and powerful attempts will be made for that purpose, as, from the great annoyance she has been to the slave-traders, the constant terror of her being found between Cape Verd and Cape Palmas (a circumstance which has prevented many vessels from slaving off that part of the coast), and the number of vessels she has captured, she is an object of the greatest hatred and detestation to the slave-merchants.

The few men of war which are sent out, run down the coast, and then leave it, whilst the colonial brig of Sierra Leone is constantly roving about, keeping the slave traders in daily fear of a visit.

The Havannah is the port from which the majority of these vessels are fitted out, though many of them, as the old American privateers, are fitted out in America, and only go to the Havannah for papers, &c.; whilst some, like the Dorset, alias Triumvirate, have the papers carried from the Havannah to America. A few, like the Louis, are fitted out from the French Islands; and the Portuguese come from the Brazils.

Many more instances of the aggressions of Slave-ships on the innocent trade of Africa might be adduced, but enough has been stated to shew the extreme difficulties and dangers under which it labours, and which must continue to exist so long as the slave trade is allowed to be carried on.

END OF VOL. IV.

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